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THE
LAY PREACHER.

A MAGAZINE FOR ALL CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

HELPS FOR THE

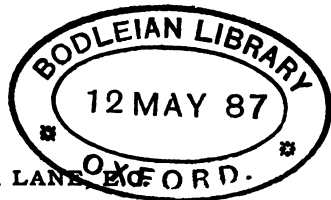
STUDY, PULPIT, PLATFORM, AND DESK.

EDITED BY JOHN W. KIRTON, LL.D.

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JANUARY, 1885.



THE LAY PREACHER

A
Magazine for all Christian Workers,
WITH HELPS FOR THE
STUDY, PULPIT, PLATFORM, & DESK.

EDITED BY THE
REV. J. W. KIRTON, LL.D.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

HELP FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

OUTLINE OF A HARVEST SERMON.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good."—Psalm cvii, 1.

HARVEST is a season of ripeness and of reaping; it should also be one of great joy in the Lord. It is a season which ought not to pass by without recognition and devout thankfulness to the giver of "every good and perfect gift. Notice:—

I. DIVINE GOODNESS.—"He is good."

1. *In Himself.* His nature is good, and His goodness is un-derived. As from none but from Himself did He derive His existence, so from none but from Himself did He derive His goodness. Whatever there is in the character of any person to be admired, that admirable trait has been derived from God and not from himself.

2. *His goodness is great.* "Oh how great is thy goodness" (Psalm xxxi, 19).

3. *It is lasting.* "The goodness of God endureth continually" (Psalm lii, 1). It is not like a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." It is not "as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that goeth away." It is lasting. It will outshine every star, outlive every forest, endure longer than the hardest rock.

While the Truth of God remains
The goodness must endure

4. *It is satisfying.* It is not the gold of Ophir, not the beauty of a landscape, not the wealth of a Rothschild that can satisfy us, but the goodness of God. "He satisfieth the longing soul and filleth," &c. He is not only good in Himself; but

II. HE IS GOOD TO US.—"Thou art good and doest good."

In a temporal sense. The past harvest is a proof of this, and it reminds us

1. *Of God's faithfulness in fulfilling the promise which He made to the world nearly six thousand years ago.* "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest," &c. (Gen. viii, 22). From that time

until now, as the years have followed each other in unbroken succession, God has fulfilled His promise. This year has been no exception to the rule. "The Lord hath been mindful of us."

2. *Harvest reminds us of God's power in conjunction with the agency of man.* The sower sows the seed, but God "blesses the springing thereof. "He crowns the year with His goodness."

3. *Harvest reminds us of God's universal benevolence to His creatures.* "The Lord is good to all," &c. (Psalm cxlv, 9).

4. *The harvest of the past is the pledge of future harvests.* Just as the harvests of the past were so many pledges of the present, so the harvest of the present is the pledge of the future.

III. GOD HAS BEEN GOOD TO US IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE.—He has not made provision to supply the wants of our lower nature, leaving our higher nature unprovided for. For the soul as for the body God has made an abundant provision. He has given us His Son, the most precious and needful of all gifts. Jesus is the crowning gift of all. Like the harvest is the crowning gift of all temporal gifts; so Jesus is the crowning gift of a spiritual gifts. He is the living bread which came down from Heaven. "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." "What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward us." "O give thanks unto the Lord."

IV. HUMAN GRATITUDE—"O give thanks." Thanksgiving is a duty enjoined.

1. *It is a personal duty.* Every individual is a partaker of the Divine Bounty, and it is the duty of each one to render God thanks. But this duty is sadly neglected. "Some glorify not God, neither are thankful."

2. *Gratitude is a national and a universal duty.* Our sea-girt island is a favoured island, but not the only one that is favoured. On us as a nation, and over all the world Divine goodness shines in every star, falls in every shower, felt in every breeze, grows in every blade of grass and corn; it is reaped in every harvest. It therefore behoves us as a nation and the world to be thankful.

3. *Gratitude is a perpetual duty.* "We are to give thanks always for all things unto God." As for everything we are to be thankful to God, so always we are to be thankful to God for everything—for the blessings of His providence as well as for the gifts of His grace. Our whole life should be one perpetual song of thanksgiving; of thanksgiving for our existence, and for the blessings provided to make our existence happy.

T. ROWE,
B.C. Minister.

Cardiff.

"THE CHAIN OF SALVATION."

From an Old MS.*

Ordnained	}	BY	God	}	IN	Heaven
Promised			The Word			Scripture
Merited			Christ			Man's Nature
Sealed			Sacraments			The Church
Received			Faith			The Heart
Confessed			The Mouth			Martyrdom
Testified			Works			Regeneration

* Part 7, title page, to Wollibins's "Christian Divinity," translated by Alex. Ross (1650).

PAUL AND THE ATHENIANS.

Acts xvii, 32-4.

THERE are here brought before us a remarkable preacher, a remarkable city, and a remarkable people. In derision Paul is called "a babbler," "a sower of vain words." Yes, he sowed words, and the harvest was much blessed. His "spirit was stirred in him," not with wonder and admiration of the city, &c. (16 v). The preacher's spirit must be "stirred" if he would stir his hearers. Athens had reached the highest point of human civilization, which left her to worship "The Unknown God." The central truth of Paul's sermon was "Jesus and the Resurrection." On other truths he dwelt, but, in their relation to this, without which they could not save, Paul's Gospel was superior to all the philosophy, &c., of Athens. To epicurean, stoic, and all he had one message.

The results of Paul's address substantially resemble those which everywhere attend the Gospel message to-day; for we have here—

I. MOCKERS.—"Some mocked.

Mockers are not peculiar to any age, city, or social grade. Some have mocked God's message and messengers all down the ages. The stoic and epicurean mock. Ignorance mocks and learning mocks. Human mockery reached its most wicked and audacious point in Pilate's Hall (Matt. xxvii, 24, &c.). Ridicule is a hurtful weapon, and many can use it who have no other. A terrible doom awaits the mocker (Prov. i, 26).

II. PROCRASTINATORS.—"Others said, 'We will hear thee again.'"

These were *preoccupied*. The stoic laboured to lull himself into indifference; the epicurean was absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure, and the crowd was in hot haste after novelty. When they said "We will hear," &c., they uttered what was most uncertain.

- (a) Would they live to hear Paul again ?
- (b) Would Paul preach there again ?
- (c) Would they have the desire to hear again ? The procrastinator is blinded, and acts most irrationally.

III. BELIEVERS.—“Certain men clave unto him and believed.”

Some seed fell upon “good ground.” As Paul looked at his audience, which thronged the areopagus, he could not distinguish these believers from the rest. “We know not which will prosper.” The sower is to sow on all kinds of soil. Fruit at Athens ! The Gospel saves the most polished and learned, and also the most ignorant and degraded.

Here all stood on an equality, yet the word to some was foolishness, and to others “the power of God.” These believers will condemn all the others. If one soul is saved under a sermon and a thousand remain in sin, that saved one attests the Divine call of the preacher, and condemns the others.

APPLICATION.—1. Preachers have one message for all kinds of sinners. Some hearers will mock, others procrastinate ; but, thank God ! some will “cleave and believe.” 2. To one or other of these classes most hearers belong.

REGENERATION.

“Ye must be born again.”—John iii, 7.

THIS chapter holds a peculiar place in sacred truth. In it is set forth with characteristic fulness and freeness, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost. It records a very interesting conversation between Christ and Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim. This ruler was convinced Jesus was Messiah (verse 2). He might have seen some marvellous display of the power of Jesus, *e.g.*, casting buyers and sellers out of the temple. However, he wished to be further instructed respecting his doctrine, so came to Jesus by night. Why he came by night we do not exactly know. It might be because he, being a member of the Chief Council, was busy all day ; or because Christ was engaged all day teaching and working miracles ; or he might be afraid of the ridicule of those in authority with him. But as there is no bad motive imputed to him in Scripture, and the Jews recommended the study of the law and theology by night, we may regard his visit to Christ in the night in a favourable light, and view him as a noble man. While together, the Saviour showed Nicodemus that it was not enough for him to be a Jew, or to acknowledge Christ to be the sent of God ; but it was necessary for him to experience in his soul a new birth. But he understood not what was

meant by the birth from above, and asked, "How can these things be?" Without any waste of words, the great Teacher began to explain the matter, and show it was not a physical, but a spiritual change, and indispensably necessary. This He affirms most emphatically and presses most pointedly: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee; except," &c.

I. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH, OR REGENERATION.—Sometimes the new birth is confounded with orthodoxy, external reformation, attendance on a formal round of duties, an amiable disposition, water baptism, &c. These all have their place, and are to be commended, but are useless as a substitute for the new birth. Being born again implies:

1. *A change from darkness to light.* Naturally, the mind is dark, wrapped in moral gloom, but with regeneration comes Divine illumination.

2. *A change from slavery to liberty.* Sin is bondage and slavery, but the regenerate man is free from the law of sin and death, and the child of glorious liberty.

3. *A change from sin to holiness.* The evil heart is put away, and a new heart given at regeneration.

4. *A change from misery to happiness.* Sin is the cause of misery, and holiness the cause of happiness. Where sin is taken away, as in the case of the regenerate, there is salvation from misery. Where holiness is the antecedent, happiness is the consequent.

II. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH OR REGENERATION.—This arises from:—

1. *Our being polluted by evil.* We are unclean.

2. *An unrenewed man's unfitness for the employments and enjoyments of heaven.* Nothing that defileth shall enter glory. Only the pure can enjoy the company and abode of the spotlessly holy.

3. *The great reason is, Christ has strictly enjoined it.* "Ye must be born again." The command of Christ should have weight. Will you heed and obey His royal mandate? If so, you will be renewed in the inner man by the washing of regeneration and the Holy Ghost, and thereby fitted for life and eternity. A regenerate life will bless and purify general society, while an unclean life will corrupt the good manners of others. A regenerate life is fit for the inheritance undefiled. An unholy life is meet only to be damned.

Sinner, seek the blessing of regeneration.

J. W.

THE THRONE OF GRACE.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews iv, 16.

INTRODUCTION.—In the two preceding verses of the chapter the

Apostle declares that Christians have an High Priest, as truly as the Jews had. Not one which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but "who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

I. WHERE WE ARE TO COME.—"To the throne of grace." It is the Throne of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His sceptre sways throughout the wide universe. He condescends to invite us to come near to Him.

Yea, we are encouraged to come.

II. How?—"Boldly."

Not hastily or irreverently, but with godly fear. God knows those who approach Him irreverently. We are not to come in our own name or merits, but in and through our Mediator, Redeemer, and Intercessor, Jesus Christ, our Lord, "who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

III. WHY?—"That we may obtain mercy and find grace."

A two-fold purpose.

(a) "*To obtain mercy.*" We have all erred and sinned against God. We deserve His wrath. Let us, while we may, "obtain mercy."

(b) "*To find grace.*" We are all weak and liable to fall. Let us come for strength in temptation; comfort in trial and trouble.

IV. WHEN?—"In time of need."

(a) "*In prosperity.*" That we may be kept humble.

(b) "*In adversity.*" Because He can help us.

(c) "*In bereavement.*" He will console, cheer, and comfort.

(d) "*In death.*" "We shall fear no evil" if Christ is with us.

G. WADSWORTH.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

Luke xv, 18, 19.

NATURE teems with analogies and similarities—plant resembling plant—animal resembling animal; this forms the basis of classification and the groundwork of all systems that obtain in the world: This resemblance exists, too, between the ideal and the actual—the earthly and the heavenly—

Earth

Is but the shadow of heaven, and things therein,
Are to each other like.

So Christ, who came to teach men new views of God and things in general, did so by parables—*i.e.*, comparisons drawn between the natural and the spiritual—hence His constant formula—"The kingdom of heaven is like"—see Matt. xiii, &c. The text is a portion of

one of these comparisons, or parables, picturing to us the way in which sinners should return to God.

I. THE PRODIGAL'S RESOLUTION.—“I will arise,” &c.

Actions result from certain causes—or stimulus—these are either internal or external. Both these obtained in the prodigal's resolution, and were —

(a) *His remembrance of the past*, “came to himself,” as *e.g.*, David Psal. cxix, 59; Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv, 34-36; Peter, Mark xiv, 72.

(b) *His destitute condition*—“in want.”

Distress is often a powerful factor in predisposing the mind to accept religion—as riches are the opposite. James ii, 5; Matt. xix, 23, 24.

(c) *His lonely condition*—“in a field.”

Most great things have either originated or have been matured in solitude—*e.g.*, the Reformation at Erfurt, Methodism in the wilds of Georgia, Jacob in Bethel, the Baptist in the wilderness, St. John in Patmos.

He carried this resolution out —

1. *With promptitude*. No break in the context leading us to infer that there was none in the performance.

2. *With perseverance*. He was in “a far country,” thus requiring—pertinacity of purpose.

3. *With confidence in his father's acceptance*.

II. THE PRODIGAL'S CONFESSION.—“Father, I have sinned,” &c.

Confession of this kind, viz., to man and God—Matt. x, 32; James v, 16; 1 John i, 9; Psalm xxxii, 5.

(a) *This was an all-comprehensive confession*. “Against heaven and before thee.”

It embraced the whole range of human sin, which has a threefold effect.

1. *It affects those who commit it*—by bringing to poverty, disgrace, disease, and death.

2. *It affects our fellows*—in thefts, murders, adulteries, example.

3. *It affects God*—the pure, just, and good Being.

(b) *Was a thoroughly sincere confession*.

This is seen from what he was willing to endure, *e.g.*, loss of caste, “hired servant,” acknowledgment of errors, jeers of former friends.

(c) *Was an humble confession*.

All his former pride was now gone—no demand for natural rights, but simply—a hireling's home and wages.—Luke xiv, 11; xviii, 14.

III. THE PRODIGAL'S PRAYER.—“Make me,” &c.

There are several kinds of prayer—for vindication of character—Elijah's—1 Kings xviii, 36, 37; for a sufficiency of food—Agar's—

Prov. xxx, 9 ; of self-praise—Pharisee's—Luke xviii, 13 ; for freedom from pain—St. Paul's—1 Cor. xii, 8.

(a) *This was a penitent prayer.*

1. Like David's—Psalm li, 9-13 ; a backslider's prayer.
2. Like the Publican's—Luke xviii, 3 ; an outcast's prayer.
3. Like the jailer's—Acts xvi, 30 ; an awakened prayer.

(b) *This was a modest prayer.*

Not for wealth, fame, clothing, sonship, but simply a servant's place in his father's house.

1. This shows man's position by sin—without a right to anything.
2. This shows the best way to regain this lost position—by confession, humility—Luke xiv, 11.

(c) *This was a successful prayer.*

1. This shows the benefit of decision of character.
2. This shows the great love of our heavenly Father.
3. This gives encouragement for all to come.

JOHN GERRARD.

Atherton.

THE PROSPERITY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

“The righteous shall flourish like palm tree.”—Psalm xcii, 12.

WHO are the righteous—*How* shall they flourish as the palm tree? Consider the tree—

1. *In its fruitfulness.* Bears fruit in its sixth or seventh year—arrives at full vigour in thirty years—bears fruit seventy years—each cluster weighing from 15 to 20 lbs., the whole yearly produce perhaps 3 cwt. (see Ps. i, 3).

2. *Its usefulness.* Every part used—*Fruit* for food—stone of the kernel ground for food for camels—*branches* for cages for poultry and fences for gardens—*leaves* for bags, mats, baskets, and brushes—*fibres* for thread, ropes—*sap* for medicine—*trunk* for fuel.

3. *Its uprightness* suggests uprightness of character—rectitude—gracefulness—beauty.

4. *Its lofty growth.* Reaches 100 feet—rises higher and higher towards heaven.

5. *Its longevity.* 200 years the term of its existence—Christian life for ever.

6. *Its germinating power.* Sends forth from its roots a wood of young suckers. If cut down and transplanted will send forth new shoots which will bear fruit in 6 or 7 years.

7. *Its beauty.* Its height—straightness—large verdant leaves—fruit—all help to make it attractive—so Christians.

8. *It always grows near water.* So Christians need refreshing influences of Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION.—(1) Are you fruitful, flourishing, or barren? Think of barren fig tree. Be cautioned—instructed.

RECONCILIATION TO GOD.

“Be ye reconciled to God.”—2 Cor. v, 20.

NOTICE Paul’s moral courage (1) in his vigorous, uncompromising preaching of the doctrines of the Gospel; (2) his call to repentance, &c., suggests: 1. Man’s need of reconciliation to God; (a) history and experience alike prove its necessity for the individual and for the race; (b) each one’s consciousness of sin; (c) the terrible results arising from estrangement from God.

2. *This reconciliation may be effected.* Context points to the means. God has provided a solution of the difficulty, how it can be done, and the conditions upon which success can be attained.

3. *The fruits of this reconciliation.* Contrast the state of the righteous and wicked, showing in the former the effects which proceed from this reconciliation.

4. *The urgent necessity* upon all unconverted to seek this.

A CHRISTIAN DEATH; A HAPPY CHANGE.

“If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.”—John xiv, 28.

THE removal of a Christian by death ought to be, so far as they are concerned, a source of joy rather than of sorrow, by reflecting upon the following contrasts:—

1. *There is sin here—perfect holiness there.*
2. *There is suffering here—felicity there.*
3. *There are fears here—peace there.*
4. *There is ignorance here—perfect knowledge there.*
5. *There are bad companions here—none there.*
6. *There are sorrows here—joy there.*
7. *There is darkness here—light there.*
8. *There is death here and endless life there.*

LESSONS.—1. Comfort for bereaved Christians. 2. We should not fear to die. 3. The impenitent ought to be alarmed. 4. How shall we best prepare to die.

CHRIST RECEIVING SINNERS.

"This man received sinners."—Luke, xv, 2.

I. CONSIDER THE TRUTH ITSELF—HE RECEIVED SINNERS—

1. *Immediately. No probation needed.*
2. *Kindly. No upbraiding.*
3. *Gracefully. Nothing needed to recommend to His mercy or to purchase pardon.*

II. TO WHAT DOES HE RECEIVE THEM.

1. *To His affections.*
2. *To His fellowship.*
3. *To His heavenly glory.*

THE GOSPEL DESERVES ATTENTION.

"If any man have ears to hear let him ear."—Mark iv, 23.

SCARCELY any subject excites less notice than the Gospel. Lectures, political addresses attract large companies. The Gospel ought to deserve attention :

1. *Because it is a message from the Ruler of the Universe.*
2. *Because it communicates information upon a subject which has excited the greatest interest among the wisest and best beings in the universe : Father, Son, Spirit, angels, and best of men and women.*
3. *Because proper attention to it will result in an infinite amount of good.*
4. *Because neglect of it will result in an infinite amount of evil.*

LESSONS.—1. *It is the duty of men to attend the preaching of the Gospel.*

2. *It is a duty to give serious attention to what is proclaimed.*
 3. *All who hear should be willing to do what the Gospel requires.*
 4. *God is infinitely kind in sending such a Gospel.*
 5. *All who are truly wise will give immediate attention to the Gospel, embrace the Saviour it reveals, and live as He requires.*
- "Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

GODLY FEAR : A CHRISTIAN DUTY.

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."—1 Peter, i-17.

1. *What should you fear ?*

Fear God—His majesty, claims, authority, rectitude.

2. *What should you fear ?*

Fear yourself. Within you a heart of unbelief. Consider your depravity, infirmity, want of caution, self-love. "Be not high-minded but fear."

3. *What should you fear?*

Fear temptation. Think of Peter, etc.

4. *What should you fear?*

Fear sin. How deploring, blinding, deadly, dangerous.

5. *What should you fear?*

Fear the world. Its sorceries, snares, enticements, "Come out from among them," etc.

6. *What should you fear?*

Fear lest you be cast away.

7. *What should you fear?*

Fear the judgment-seat of Christ. "Everyone one of us must give account," etc.

Three practical applications arising from—

1. *The character of Jehovah as our Father and Judge.*

2. *The price of our redemption—the blood of Christ.*

3. *The frailty and brevity of human life.*

Indifference will not protract the time.

Obduracy will not screen from the judgment-seat of Christ.

Godly fear alone will secure the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come.

THEMES AND TEXTS.

Reflections for the New Year.—Exodus xl, 2.

Noah's walk.—Gen. vi, 9.

The spiritual beggar.—Luke xi, 9.

The dwelling-place of Jesus.—John i, 36.

The birthday.—Gen. xl, 20.

The unlonely solitude.—John xvi, 32.

The lovely household.—Acts x, 7, 8.

The unlooked-for companion.—Luke xxiv, 13-15.

Important recollection.—Deut. xxiv, 18.

The healthful inhabitant.—Isa. xxxiii, 24.

The real miracle.—Acts iii, 9, 10.

The three heroes.—Deut. iii, 12.

Union of hope and fear.—Psalms xxxiii, 11.

The discouraged pilgrim.—Numb. xxi, 4.

Trials not strange.—1 Peter iv, 12.

Advantages of inquiry.—Deut. xxxii, 7.

THE Sabbath is the savings bank of human life, into which is deposited one day in seven, to be repaid in the autumn of life with compound interest.

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

GATES.

"Go through, go through the gates."—Isa. lxii, 10.

A ROYAL COMMAND.

Gates are useful things : (1) to keep *out* stray animals ; (2) to keep *in* flocks and herds ; (3) useful as landmarks—to draw forth our activity—if lazy and timid will check us.

Many gates spoken of in the Bible ; Paradise, Sodom, Jerusalem, etc.

ALL HAVE TO GO THROUGH GATES :—

1. There are gates we cannot help going through—(a) Life ; (b) Death.

2. There are gates through which we should strive to escape—(a) Sin ; (b) Satan.

3. There are gates through which we should strive to enter—(a) Kingdom of God ; (b) Repentance is a *low* gate ; (c) Faith is a *difficult* gate ; (d) Obedience is a *painful* gate.

4. Two gates which shut in for eternity—(a) The gate of Hell ; (b) The gate of Heaven.

—*Abridged from F. B., in Outlines of Sermons for Children in Clerical Library.*

MONTGOMERY WHEN A BOY.—James Montgomery narrated the following curious anecdote of himself, at a meeting in Scotland :—The parents of the poet had gone abroad, and the little boy was left with the Moravian brethren at Fulneck, near Leeds. He was one of their youngest scholars, at the time when Lord Monboddo (who was well known for his great talents and acquirements, and his scarce less marked eccentricities) visited the settlement, and, among many other things, their little school. His lordship stood among the boys, coiling and uncoiling his whip on the floor, and engaged as if counting the nail-heads in the boarding beneath. The little fellows were all exceedingly curious. None of them had ever seen a real living lord before ; and Monboddo was a very strange-looking lord indeed. He wore a large stiff, bushy periwig, surmounted by a huge, odd-looking hat. His very plain coat was studded with brass buttons, of broadest disc ; and his voluminous inexpressibles were of leather. There he stood, with his grave, absent face bent downwards, drawing and redrawing his whip along the floor, as the Moravian, his guide, pointed out to

his notice boy after boy. "And this," said the Moravian brother, coming at length to young Montgomery, "is a countryman of your lordship's." Lord Monboddó raised himself up and looked hard at the little fellow; then shaking his huge whip over his head, which almost excited terror at the expected issue, he exclaimed, "Ah! I hope his country will have no reason to be ashamed of him." "The circumstance," said the poet, made a deep impression on my mind, and I determined—I trust the resolution was not made in vain—I determined in that moment that my country should not have reason to *be ashamed of me!*"

ADAM CLARKE WHEN A BOY.—When Adam Clarke was about six years of age he was strongly attached to a lovely boy, called James Brooks. One day, when walking, hand-in-hand, in a field near the house, they sat down on a bank and began to enter into very serious conversation. They both became much affected, and this was deepened to exquisite distress by the following observations made by little *Brooks*: "Oh! Addy, Addy," said he, "what a dreadful thing is *eternity*, and, oh! how dreadful to be put into hell-fire, and to be burnt there for ever and ever!" They both wept bitterly, and, as they could begged of God to forgive their sins; and they made to each other strong promises of amendment. They wept till they were really sick, and parted from each other with full and pensive hearts! In reviewing this circumstance, Adam has been heard to say:—"I was then truly and deeply convinced that I was a sinner, and that I was liable to eternal punishment, and that nothing but the mercy of God could save me from it; though I was not so conscious of any other sin as that of disobedience to my parents, which at that time affected me most forcibly. When I left my little companion I went home, told the whole to my mother with a full heart, expressing the hope that I should never more say any bad words or refuse to do what she or my father might command. She was both surprised and affected, and gave me much encouragement, and prayed heartily for me."

VALUE OF CHILDHOOD.—We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it. These familiar flowers, these well-remembered bird-notes, this sky with its fitful brightness, these furrowed and grassy fields, each with a sort of personality given to it by the capricious hedge-rows—such things as these are the mother-tongue of our imagination, the language that is laden with all the subtle inextricable associations the fleeting hours of our childhood left behind them. Our delight in the sunshine on the deep bladed grass to-day might be no more than the faint perception of wearied souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in far off years, which still live in us, and transform our perception into love.—*George Eliot.*

SIDE LIGHTS.

THE DEVIL'S SIN.—“For the devil sinneth from the beginning ;” or, “because from the beginning the devil sinneth” (1 John, iii 8). “From the beginning” stands first for emphasis. What does it mean ? Various explanations have been suggested. (1) From the beginning of *sin*. The devil was the first to sin, and has never ceased to sin. (2) From the beginning of the *devil*. This comes very near to asserting the Gnostic and Manichæan error of two co-eternal principles or creators, one good and one evil. The very notion of sin involves departure from what is good. The good, therefore, must have existed first. To avoid this, (3) from the beginning of the devil *as such, i.e.*, from the time of his becoming the devil ; or (4) from the beginning of his *activity* ; which is not very different from (3) if one believes that he is a fallen angel, or from (2) if one does not. (5), From the beginning of the *world*. (6) From the beginning of the *human race*. The first or last seems best. “The phrase ‘from the beginning’ intimates that there has been no period of the existence of human beings in which they have not been liable to the assaults of this tempter ; that accusations against God, reasons for doubting and distrusting Him, have been offered to one man after another, to one generation after another. This is just what the Scripture affirms ; just the assumption which goes through the book from Genesis to the Apocalypse.”—(*Maurice*). Note the present tense ; not he has sinned but he is sinning ; his whole existence is sin.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools*.

THE PLATFORM.

“Be not weary in well doing,” &c., Gal. vi, 9.

1. Our life should be one of well doing.
 2. All are apt to grow weary.
 3. The encouragement to perseverance.
-

HOME COMFORTS.—BLACKBOARD OUTLINE.

1. HOME COMFORTS : WHAT ARE THEY ?
 - Health.
 - Order.
 - Mother.
 - Eating and drinking.

2. HOME COMFORTS: HOW TO GET THEM.
 Hard work.
 Obedience.
 Money.
 Economy.
3. HOME COMFORTS: HOW TO LOSE THEM.
 Habits of a bad character.
 Opposition to good advice.
 Making light of sin.
 Entering into the part of the wicked.

REVIEWS.

“From ‘the Beginning’ to ‘the Glory’; or, Scripture Lessons for Bible Classes and Senior Classes in Sunday Schools. Chiefly from the Books of Genesis and Exodus.” By Lady B. Dent. Nisbet and Co., 3s 6d. These lessons are packed full of material, and cannot fail to be of great service to those who wish to be well fitted to instruct the young people committed to their charge. It would be helpful to Lay Preachers, inasmuch as it condenses into a small compass many valuable hints.

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ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

“THE WORK OF THY HANDS.”—Among all the constellations in the sky, there is no other which has, in all ages, attracted so much human interest as the little cluster of the Pleiades. One of the finest passages in Scripture is the question of Job: “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bonds of Orion?” And for many centuries, a succession of poetic feeling has gathered around “the long lost sister of the seven stars.” But a fresh interest has now been given to this storied group; for the computations of Maedler lead to the conclusion that Alcyone, the brightest star of the cluster

occupies the very centre around which the hosts of heaven roll their majestic courses. The distance of our sun from the centre of gravity of this stellar system, as well as the velocity of its motion, is yet undetermined, though some of Maedler's observations indicate that the distance is such that it would take light 640 years to pass through the space; that the sun's velocity in his orbit is about 1,000 miles per minute, and that it will take him about 20,000,000 of years to make one revolution. The latest conclusion, in regard to the size of our stellar system is, that a ray of light, moving at the rate of 192,000 miles per second, would require about 4,000 years to pass through its diameter.

WHAT IS A CHURCH?—Should not a church be *an hospital* for sick and wounded souls? Nay, are any of us more than patients just removed, or hoping to be removed, into the convalescent ward? And then, should not the church be *a school*, where the little ones, nourished on milk, may learn their Gospel alphabet; and the elder ones, fed on stronger meat, go on to the higher and deeper truths, and be disciplined in the robuster exercises of godliness, the profounder lessons which the cross of self-sacrifice is full of? Aye, and should it not be *a sanctuary* too? not exclusively in the present ordinary sense of the word, but in that which makes it a refuge for the morally bruised and shamed—a refuge where shame, treated tenderly and sisterly, might gradually rise again into hope and self-respect! The “woman that had been a sinner” fled by a true instinct to the Master's feet, and who of us does not love her as a sister? Is not the Church now, or any church, to be “as in Christ's stead?” In a word, is not a church to be *a family and a home*?

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS AND OTHERS.

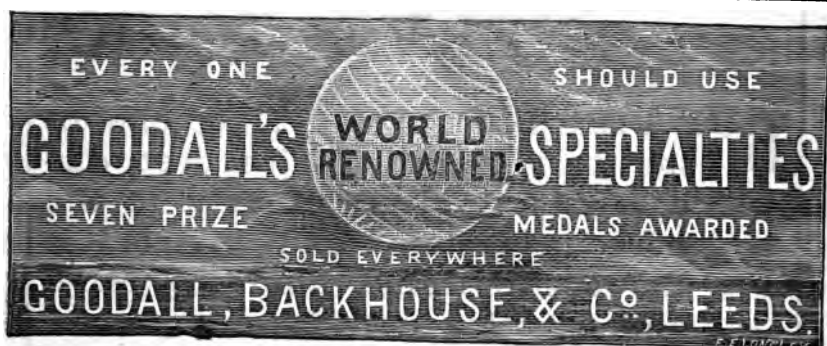
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FEBRUARY, 1885.



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EDITED BY THE

REV. J. W. KIRTON, LL.D.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

THE BEAUTIFUL END OF A NOBLE LIFE.

IN the thirty-first chapter of Deuteronomy we find Moses encouraging the children of Israel at the prospect of his death. For him the end was at hand, his dying day was near, and he was soon to follow his fathers to the silent world of the departed. This we always speak of as "a solemn event," but other things should be noticed concerning it. To a good man it is a joyous, blessed, and sublime change: To him "the day of death is better than the day of one's birth." To come into *this* world is a great event. To see its sights, and hear its sounds; to engage in its work; to enjoy its loves and friendships; even to struggle with its difficulties is a glorious privilege, if we think well of it. But the day of death is better, grander, and more glorious. There is a nobler world, a higher state than this, in which life is fuller, richer, and deeper; a state in which God is nearer to the soul than now; where knowledge is clearer and completer; where sin is not found, and sorrow is for ever absent. There the spirit of man attains its perfect maturity, and blessedness has no mingling of regrets and tears. Death is the introduction into that state, the entrance into the real "kingdom of God," the passing through the golden gates into the Holy City.

This was the change Moses was expecting. His work was done. He could no more "go out and come in." The thousands of Israel stand face to face with him for the last time. There is a dignity in his bearing, a power in his words at this last interview which cannot fail to move us. The pathos and charm of this closing scene are most touching.

He was a good man. The Divine voice spoke to him; he listened, learned, and obeyed. This great saying was true of him, "He served God." The Divine will was the law of his life; he felt the touch of the invisible hand, and allowed himself to be guided by it. Nothing so beautiful can be said of a man on his burial day as this—"He served God." God sent him into the world, he discovered what the Divine will was in regard to Him, and obeyed it. The reverse picture is unspeakably sorrowful. You may say over the grave of a wicked man, "God sent him here for a great and glorious purpose, and gave him every opportunity of knowing what that purpose was, but he failed willingly to understand it, he loved sin, went on from mistake to mistake, from one sin to another; he sank lower and yet lower, wandered farther and ever farther from the truth and the right, and worn out in the service of sin, DIED." We say nothing of what awaits him beyond.

Let solemn, sorrowful silence suggest what it may be. Some say eternal, regretful existence, others, annihilation ; while some have a hope that at a distant day he may be restored. We enter not upon those questions ; in any case, the future of the ungodly is full of sorrow, terrible to contemplate.

He was aged. "I am a hundred and twenty years old this day." It was time to rest. The death of a child is like crushing a flower before it has opened. The death of a young man is like the falling of a warrior by a stray shot on the morning of the battle, before the real conflict has begun. But the departure of the aged saint is natural and comely. It is so in relation to the *physical* part of his being. When the body is shattered with age, it is meet that it should return and mingle again with its native elements. Beautiful is the saying, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The body is of the earth, earthy ; therefore, let it go to rest in the bosom of nature, whence it came. That which is really divine in the body, the form, majestic, harmonious, and beautiful as it is, shall be preserved. The future body shall have the real human form, with this difference, that it shall be refined, elevated, and idealised, and made almost spiritual. Artists sometimes idealise a face ; you hardly know it at first, but having looked *into* it, you see that it is the face of him whom you know : the old form, and lines, and expression are there, only the genius has imparted a half-spiritual quality which makes them tenfold more beautiful. So the future body shall have the form of the present one, and that form made "like unto His glorious body," who is the King and representative of men.

But death is natural and comely in the aged saint in regard to the soul also. St. Paul said, "I have a desire to depart," and this longing often comes to the "man of God" in old age. The unseen world seems near to him, and more real than it was in early life ; he longs to know the great secret of the heavenly state, of which the New Testament speaks so much. *He yearns for rest* after the sore trials of this existence ; his friends, too, are gone before, and he would join them. God is revealed in the upper world as He is not in this, and he would see the vision ; and Christ, whom he loves with intensest love, is there, and who can wonder if he is in haste to gaze upon His glory ? The captive bird flutters in its cage, presses hard against the bars, and pines for the free and boundless air in which to soar and sing ; and so there are saintly souls who desire to depart. They are restless, uneasy, and would gladly go hence ; to them death is kind, an angel of God, their deliverer—for he sets them free, and with a glad cry of relief they escape, and ascend into the eternal life.

Then the calmness and self-possession of Moses strike us. He speaks

of his death with perfect peace, and does not mention anything dreadful in connection with it. What was the cause of his peace? There is little, perhaps nothing, said in a direct way in the Old Testament to reveal the heavenly life; but we love to think that a man like Moses had some light on the great subject. Several things lead us to think that he had. He was a *thoughtful* man, and thoughtful men in all ages have had the *idea* of a future glorious life. In one form or another it is always found in such minds. It is, perhaps, only a dream, or half-belief, or tradition; but there it is. Man cannot think long without asking, "Is there a life beyond this?" But more, Moses had much communion with God. Nature, I think, will confirm your belief in a future life. Hold fellowship with her, gaze upon her immense workings, and you will see so much life and energy, that it will be difficult to believe in eternal death. You are standing as it were on the shore, and the waves roll up one after the other from the great ocean of existence; young, fresh, and new, they come, and you feel that you are in a living universe, and not a dying creation, and that life is stronger than death. Again, there are *men* who confirm us in the same belief. They strengthen, if they don't create in us, the idea of an immortal life. They possess such mental power, they are so wise and good, there is in their character so much to be admired and loved, that we say, "All this cannot die for ever." But Moses had more than this—he enjoyed much fellowship with God. The Lord spoke to him at Horeb, he heard His voice on Sinai, and saw His presence in the tabernacle. Surely, we are not to think that such a man would be left in utter darkness with regard to the future. Communing as he did with the God of life, some rays of light must have shone into his mind.

We cannot fail to notice, besides, the strong element of what we may call *humanness* in this aged, holy, calm man at the end of life. We see that his interest in the people and their affairs had not ceased. He was leaving the world. The Divine call had come, and he must obey; but that did not so absorb his attention as to make him forget his friends. He was not so engrossed with his own departure that he had not a thought to give those whom he was leaving behind. All that concerns them is of interest to him to the last; he carries them in his thoughts to the very door of death. In the 30th chapter he charges them to obey the Lord their God; in the 31st he speaks words of the greatest encouragement to strengthen their hearts; in the following chapter comes his song of praise; and in the 33rd he takes up the tribes singly and pronounces upon each its blessing. Here and there he refers to the riches and goodness of the material world. "The land blessed of the Lord;" the dew of heaven, the deep that croucheth beneath, the precious things of the sun and the moon, the chief things

of the ancient mountains, the fruits of the lasting hills, and the fulness of the fertile earth. This world had not lost its charm to him because he was leaving it. Everything that concerned the future home of the people whom he loved was of interest to him. He was not afraid, death had no terrors for him, he was filled with "great peace;" and yet he seemed loath to depart. We have seen people part from each other after this manner:—They said farewell, and then returned to say something they had forgotten; then went, and returned again to say the last word, which proved not to be the last, for once again they had something more to communicate. It was exactly so with Moses. He was long, very long, in saying his last word. He said it by way of charge to the people; said it in words of encouragement; said it in a song of praise; and finally said it in blessings upon the tribes of Israel. This lasting human love—the love that is young in old age, that does not decay in the time of weakness, that lives in death, and interests itself in the affairs of the people to the last—is very beautiful and touching.

We must not forget *his parting words of encouragement* to the people. "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Moses here touched a deep chord, and drew forth a strain of music which shall never die. The same words were spoken to Joshua when he was called to place himself at the head of the people, and lead them into the promised land, "I will never fail thee nor forsake thee." David used them to strengthen his son Solomon. "The Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." They are taken up for the comfort of the Christian Church in one of the New Testament epistles, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." These words come with force from the lips of Moses, for he had experience of the Divine faithfulness. His life had been one of many trials, but God had never failed him. It is pleasant to hear children praise the name of the Lord. Young men and maidens are called upon to glorify His name; but such praise is wanting in the deepest meaning, for their experience is not deep. But to hear an aged man, after all the sorrows of life, with trembling, dying lips, bear testimony to the faithfulness of God, is most helpful. He speaks from experience, feels and knows the truth of his own words. We will strengthen our hearts at the threshold of the New Year with this thought, that through all its varied scenes the companionship of God is assured us; tried we may be, but forsaken never; the loneliness of sorrow may come upon us, but He will be nigh at hand.

We end here. This testimony of Moses lends glory to his depart-

ing spirit. The light of it is upon his face as he passes from our sight. We have seen nothing in the world grander than this—a good man, ripe in years, calm in spirit, with no shadow of a fear, departing from the world with these words upon his lips : “ Fear God, love Him, do His will, and He will never leave you nor forsake you.”

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REV. THOMAS JONES.

HINTS ABOUT READING.

HUMANLY speaking, much of the interest and profit to be derived from the worship of God depends upon the manner with which the Scriptures are read, and yet, strange to say, few ministers or preachers seem to realize its importance. Like all other good things, it has to be cultivated if perfection is to be attained. Slipshod, careless, or indifferent methods will always prove a barrier in the way of listening with profit, to people, whether ignorant or well-informed, while efforts of a proper character to render the reading in such a manner as the subject needs will always command respect, and be productive of good results.

It is not intended to do more here than to give a few hints ; but these, if adopted, will, sooner or later, be followed with such results that they will amply prove sufficient to convince those who make the needful attempt, how wise it has been to put them into practice. The subject is of vital importance and full of blessing to readers and listeners alike.

Let us, then, note a few of the most important points.

1. Cultivate the habit of reading in a tone sufficiently *loud* to be heard by the whole congregation. Avoid shouting, but endeavour to read in such a manner as to be readily heard by even those who are farthest removed away from the pulpit.

2. Read *distinctly*. Try that *each* word, and especially the *final* ones, be completely and clearly distinguished. It is a great, though a very common defect, where this is not attended to. Watch this, therefore, very closely, mind and read with the mouth open, and free from anything like those who have some impediment lurking within.

3. Read *solemnly*. You should try and realize that it is *God's* word you are reading. Place yourself as much as possible in the position of one who has to declare a message from the King of Kings, to those who are gathered to hear it.

4. Be careful about placing the *right emphasis* on each word, so as to make the proper meaning of the sacred writers clearly understood. To do this, you will act wisely if you carefully read over beforehand,

in the quiet of your own room, what you intend to read in the house of God, so as to clearly understand it yourself.

5. Read *deliberately*, so that you may bring out with distinctness the several points. Mind the various stops in the sentence, so that you may give proper effect to the words. Watch also the marks of exclamation, and interrogation. Gabbling on without giving attention to these points, will of necessity render the reading of any portion liable to be misunderstood, and be sure to make it altogether unprofitable. A hasty, flippant, careless manner of reading the Word of God is not only unbecoming, but decidedly wrong in those who do it.

6. Avoid *affectation*. There is such a thing as being too pedantic and putting emphasis where it is not required. Seek to be natural in voice, tone, and manner, and carefully guard against anything like a dramatic or unnatural tone in either your voice or manner of reading.

7. Not only apply these rules to the reading of the Scriptures, but it will be well to do the same when giving out the Psalms and hymns. Much of the beauty and impressiveness of the sentiment of many hymns is often lost, through the careless or monotonous manner with which they are given out. If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well, is an old proverb, which may be, with great advantage, applied to all those who have to read the Scriptures or give out the hymns in our places of worship.

HELP FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

THE CHRISTIAN'S REST.

"There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God."—Heb. xv, 9.

I. THERE IS A REST.

1. *From bodily suffering.*
2. *From bodily weakness.*
3. *From bodily decay.*
4. *From mental anxiety.*
5. *From mental affliction.*
6. *From mental debility.*
7. *From sinful thoughts.*
8. *From painful temptations.*

II. THE REST IS FOR PECULIAR CHARACTERS.—The people of God:—

1. *Conformed to His image.*
2. *Devoted to His service.*
3. *Under His peculiar care.*

III. THE REST IS IN PROSPECT

1. *As an object of pleasing anticipation.*

2. *As an object of certain possession.*

IV. THE REST WILL BE LASTING.

1. *It will be uninterrupted.*

2. *It will be eternal.*

3. *It will be full of joy.*

THE TWO SPIRITS.

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry Abba, Father."—Rom. viii, 15.

I. THE FACT ASSERTED.

1. *Reception of the Spirit of God.*

2. *The effects of that Spirit on the mind.*

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL.

1. *He cannot be a Christian who has not received the Spirit of Christ, (1 Cor. ii, 12).*

2. *He is a Christian who has*

III. THE TWO-FOLD TEST.

1. *The spirit of bondage.* (a) It is a spirit of tormenting fear; (b) it is marked by imperfect knowledge.

2. *The spirit of adoption.*

a. *It is the spirit of grateful joy.*

b. *It is the filial affection.*

c. *It is the reverence.*

d. *It is the obedience.*

e. *It is the prayer.*

f. *It is the joyful anticipation of heaven.*

THE WITNESSES.

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."—1 John v, 10.

Two kinds of evidence—(1) Outward; (2) inward.

I. THE OUTWARD.

1. *The credibility of the sacred writers.*

2. *The attestation God has given.*

3. *The miracles Christ has wrought.*

4. *The fulfilment of prophecy.*

II. THE INWARD.

1. *Correction of sin.*

2. *Acceptance of Christ.*

3. *Sincere opposition to sin.*

4. *The pleasures of religion.*

5. *Communion with God.*

6. *Love to God and man.*

OBEDIENCE.

"When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."—Psalm xxvii, 8.

I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS INVITATION?

1. *An acquaintance with God.*
2. *Participation of His blessings.*
3. *Conformity to His invitation.*

II. HOW IS GOD SOUGHT?

1. *By reading His Word.*
2. *By watching the leadings of His providence.*
3. *By yielding to the influence of His Spirit.*

III. THE SOUL'S REPLY.

1. *It is the language of reason.*
2. *It is the language of the heart.*
3. *It is the language of duty.*
4. *It is the language of gratitude.*
5. *It is the language of confidence.*
6. *It is the language of resolution.*

MISSIONARY ENCOURAGEMENT.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."—Isaiah xl, 3-5.

I THE DUTY OF PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD.

1. *The herald.*
2. *The scene of His labours.* The world a desert, &c.
3. *The work to which the herald calls.*

II. THE DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENTS.

1. *Every difficulty, however formidable, shall be surmounted.*
2. *Every obstacle, however great, shall be removed.*
3. *There shall be the universal manifestation of the Divine glory.*
4. *The certainty that this shall come to pass.*

THE HEAVENLY RACE.

"So run that ye may obtain."—1 Cor. ix, 24.

I. THE THINGS NEEDFUL FOR RUNNING THE RACE.

1. *A clear view of Divine things.* (a) To know the way of truth in opposition to error. (b) To know the way of holiness in opposition to the way of wickedness.
2. *A well-studied and careful preparation.* (a) Strict discipline. (b) Self-denial. (c) Casting off every incumbrance.

II. THE BLESSINGS WHICH WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO SUCCEED.

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SIDE LIGHTS.

PHARISAIC RELIGION.—Luke xviii, 9.—Rousseau dared to say that when the balance was struck between him and God he expected it would be in his favour. “I have worked much and untiringly,” says Victor Hugo; “I have been able to pay my debt to God and to do what He expected of me.”

THE CHRISTIAN A SERVANT.—John xiii, 13.—Dr. Muhlenburg gave a beautiful illustration of obedience to his Master when he once took up a tray of dishes in St. Luke's hospital and carried them down to the kitchen. Some one meeting him, and protesting against his doing such menial work, he quickly said, “What am I, but a waiter in the Lord's hotel?”

CHRIST'S ORDERS.—Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.—“Sir,” said the Duke of Wellington to an officer who urged the impossibility of executing the directions he had received, “I did not ask your opinion; I gave you my orders, and I expect to have them obeyed.” Such should be the obedience of every follower of Jesus Christ. The words which He has spoken are our law, not our judgments or fancies. Even if death were in the way, it is

Not ours to reason why,
Ours but to do or die.

HUMAN FORGIVENESS.—Rom. xii, 19.—A traveller in Burmah, fording a river, found his body covered all over with leeches, busy sucking his blood. He began to tear the tormentors from his flesh, but his servant told him that his wounds would be poisoned unless the leeches dropped off spontaneously. The servant prepared a bath with healing herbs and directed his master to lie down in it. As soon as he bathed in the balsam, the leeches dropped off. You must bathe your whole being in God's pardoning mercy, and enemies, those venomous creatures, will let go their hold.

GRATITUDE FOR REDEMPTION.—I Cor. vi, 20.—A gentleman, visiting a slave-mart, was deeply moved by the agony of a slave-girl, who had been delicately reared, and feared that she should fall into the hands of a rough master. The gentleman enquired her price, paid it to the slave-dealer, then placed the bill of sale in her own hands, telling her that she was free, and could now go home. The girl could not realize the change at first, but running after her redeemer, cried, “He has redeemed me! he has redeemed me! Will you let me be your servant?” How much more should we serve Him who has redeemed us from sin, death, and hell!

THE INDISPENSABLE GARMENT.—Matt. xxii, 12.—Some officers in Her Majesty's service were invited to attend the marriage of an

Eastern magnate. They were in full-dress uniform ; but the servant at the door said, " You cannot enter, gentlemen, without you have on the wedding garment." " Oh, yes ; we can go anywhere in this uniform," rejoined the officers, " we can even go to Her Majesty's receptions in it." " I can't help that," was the servant's answer, " you must put on the wedding garment, or you cannot enter." He reached up to some robes hanging on the wall, and gave them one each, which they at once put on, and then entered. This incident vividly explains the seeming injustice of the host at the feast in the parable. Wedding garments were *provided free of cost* to those who entered, and for visitors not to avail themselves of the provision made for them was to commit a breach of courtesy, and slight and *insult the host*. So is it with the righteousness of Christ. There is no entering heaven without it, whatever uniform we may wear. But, thank God, it is provided for every willing sinner, entirely free of cost.

REDEEMING THE TIME.—Eph. v, 19.—Two men stood at the same table in a large factory in Philadelphia working at the same trade. Having an hour for their nooning every day, each undertook to use it in accomplishing a definite purpose ; each persevered for about the same number of months, and each won success at last. One of these two mechanics used his daily leisure hour in working out the invention of a machine for sawing a block of wood into almost any desired shape. When his invention was complete, he sold the patent for a fortune, changed his workman's apron for a broadcloth suit, and moved out of a tenement-house into a brown-stone mansion. The other man what did he do ? Well, he spent an hour each day during most of a year in the very difficult undertaking of teaching a little dog to stand on his hind feet and dance a jig, while he played the tune. At last accounts he was working ten hours a day at the same trade and at his same old wages, and finding fault with the fate that made his fellow-workman rich while leaving him poor. Leisure minutes may bring golden grain to mind as well as to purse, if one harvests wheat instead of chaff.

HELP FOR PRAYER MEETING.

HOW TO MAKE IT INTERESTING AND PROFITABLE.

By REV. J. H. ELLIOT.

I. Arrange matters so as to have all take part. This the pastor can do by having it distinctly understood that all prayers and talks shall be short, first setting an example himself, and then by going to those who are backward and timid about doing anything, and privately encouraging them to read a promise or make a short prayer. Very

often these timid ones hold back because they despair of making such a prayer as Brother Tedious, or such a long talk as Brother Prosy. Sometimes they hesitate because the pastor has not invited them to take part. Yet these very timid ones often make the best of workers when they are developed. If a few are inclined to do all the talking it is a good plan to make a selection of two or three, and after telling the chapter to be read, ask them to be ready to say a word just as quick as they get the opportunity. In this selection different persons should be called on, old and young, until every member of the church takes part.

II. Let the people know the subject in advance. Announce it from the pulpit for instance, and ask all to come prepared from the Word of God to give some thought. Encourage them to bring their own Bibles with them, and to follow in the reading of the lesson or Scripture quotations. This will familiarize them with a practical use of the Book, and so make it more real and precious to them.

III. Let the singing be spirited and frequent. It is not wise to sing more than two or three verses of a hymn at one time, and the singing should be in charge of a consecrated Christian man, who can select and announce suitable hymns when needed. A great deal depends on their appropriateness to the thought of the moment. A good meeting can be spoiled by singing "Am I a soldier of the Cross," when "Simply trusting every day," should be sung. Both hymns are good and Scriptural—it is simply a question of appropriateness.

IV. A great deal of the success of a prayer meeting depends on the way it is opened. The pastor should avoid anything stiff or formal—sometimes it is wise to sit while giving out the first hymn, or even while the lesson is being read. One of the most interesting meetings I ever attended was opened in this way, and when the pastor, who led, came to read, he simply (while still sitting) pulled a little Bible out of his vest pocket, and read in a most natural and unaffected way. It was so natural and easy that everybody seemed to feel at home at once.

V. Encourage the people to send written requests for prayer, or to present special cases. This will serve to give something definite to pray for, and will almost invariably lead those who present such subjects for prayer to take a greater interest in the meeting themselves.

VI. Don't fail to make the people feel that it is *their meeting*, and that they are responsible for its success. The pastor has an opportunity twice on the Sabbath, at least, to instruct his church on theological points, but the prayer meeting belongs to the people peculiarly, and just in proportion as they take an active part in making it a success will they be interested and qualified to engage in all departments of church work. I have in mind two sister churches in a certain city. At the first (with a membership nearly double that of the second), the

pastor did nearly all that was done, and had an average attendance of about fifty at the prayer meeting. At the second, the pastor was wise enough to draw all into taking part, doing nothing himself but to give the key-note, keeping the meeting in line, and add a few words at the close, by way of gathering up and emphasizing the best thoughts of the evening. The result was an average attendance of over three hundred persons at his prayer meeting.

VII. Make the prayer meeting the social gathering of the church, and let the membership be drilled into speaking to one another and to strangers. Some one has said that the best part of most prayer meetings is where at the close the company gather around the stove or the door in a social chat. It ought to be that no one could go to his own prayer meeting without feeling he was one of the family, and experiencing all the freedom of home.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE BEST HOME.

"Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort."—Ps. lxxi, 3.

I AM going to talk to you about the best home you could ever think of. There is no home anywhere, however fine, however full of toys and pictures, however full of smiles and sweetness, that can compare with it. And where do you think it is? In heaven? Oh, no. It is just here beside you. All you have to do is to enter through the door, which is Jesus Christ, and you are there, at home in God's palace, in God's heart, where there is everything to make you happy. God is a home; that's what our text says.

But what is home without liberty, without freedom? You would not like to have God looking down upon you all the time. He is so good that you are afraid of Him. You would not care about being in a fine house where you had to be careful how you walked and how you spoke, where you would be punished for every naughty act. Ah, my dear children, if you only get into this home your hearts will be so changed that it will be your delight to please God. You always like to be near those whom you love. The flower looks out every morning for the sunlight. It would die if you should put it somewhere where the smiles of heaven could not reach it. And so it is with you, if you only get into this blessed home. You will live in your heavenly Father's smiles, and you will have all the freedom that you want.

But I don't care, say you, to live in a home where there is no playground. I like to run and leap and enjoy myself. Well, do you think God is displeased with your innocent amusements? Did He not give

the little birds wings to fly and voices to sing? Everything God ever made is set to music. There is nothing that pleases me more in the family than to see the children happy. And when you get into this home God will be your Father, and nothing will be sweeter music to His ear than the sound of your merry laughter. He has made every provision for your happiness. This beautiful home has in it a playground and picture gallery, and everything else that a young heart, changed by the Holy Spirit, can desire.

But you say again, What is home without a mother? Ah, it is not necessary that you should leave your earthly mother to become an inhabitant of this palace-home. And more than that, immediately you yield your heart to Christ, God becomes your mother. You may have thought that God was hard and cruel, looking down upon his children with angry, frowning face; but it is a great mistake—God is love. “As a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you,” is what He says to all those who come to Him—to all His dear children.

I. HOME IS A PLACE OF SHELTER AND SECURITY.

Every boy and girl feels safe at home. There is a little fellow trembling and crying in the presence of a lot of boys larger than himself. They are about to punish him for something he has done. But by-and-bye, when their attention has been diverted by some passing object of interest, he gets an opportunity to escape, and he runs with all his might until he gets to the door-step of his own home, and there all fear is gone.

Now there are a great many dangers and troubles in the world that grasp us, and threaten us, and frighten us; but if we only get into this home of which I am speaking, they can't harm us. God is a sure refuge for His children.

Long, long ago, the great rich people lived in castles built of strong stone walls, and frequently surrounded by a deep, broad ditch, so that robbers and enemies would not be able to enter and despoil them of their property. Very frequently they used to fight with each other, and when the battle began to turn against them, they would flee into their castles, and there they were safe. Now, God is a great castle; He is a “strong habitation.” If you once get inside of it no enemy can harm you. The devil himself cannot follow you into this blessed retreat.

I know a little boy who was out one afternoon when a storm came up suddenly. The great clouds were piling one upon another, and the deep loud thunder-peals made the earth fairly tremble under that little boy's feet as he ran with all his might toward home. And when he got there, wasn't he glad? His young heart leaped for very joy as he nestled close to papa's chair. All fear was gone, for he was at home.

Now, that is just what God is to His children. He is a refuge from the storms of life.

I once heard of a lonely traveller who sought to cross one of the western prairies. The only thing he had to guide him was a path that had been made by other travellers in the rank grass. But he had not gone very far before the snow began to fall, at first in scattered flakes like large white feathers, but by-and-bye with thick and blinding fierceness. He soon lost every trace of the path along which he travelled. He was lost, bewildered, and as the darkness began to gather around him, he was greatly alarmed. He cried out for help, but the wild winds only laughed at him as they swept by. He was almost in despair, when he saw through the blinding flakes a flickering light. Towards it he bent his exhausted energies. Stumbling and falling over the drifts that had accumulated here and there, he at length came to a settler's cottage. Can you imagine his thankfulness and joy when he found the storm behind him, and a bright fire and abundant welcome before him in that friendly hut? He was safe. He was happy. In the moment of greatest peril he had found a refuge. Now that is just what God is to every traveller caught in the storm of life. If you but see the light that streams out from the windows of His palace, of His heart, and follow it, you will be safe from harm. The door of mercy is always open; the fires of His love and forgiveness are always glowing; the welcome which He gives is always abundant.

II. HOME IS A PLACE OF SUPPLY.

I know that there are homes where children do not have many nice things, where they have at times to suffer hunger. But such is not the case with this home of which I am speaking. This home has everything to make those who live in it satisfied and happy. Many of you have very pleasant homes, where there are ever so many good things. You have kind fathers and mothers who are pleased to give you almost everything that you desire—nice food, beautiful clothes, attractive toys, and interesting books. But they can't do for you what God can. If you make Him your home, you "shall not want any good thing." In Him is the most satisfying supply. The heavenly manna, even angel's food, is here. The table of this spiritual home is a continual banquet.

III. HOME IS A PLACE OF LOVE.

There are some homes unworthy of the name. They are scenes of strife and misery. They are gardens without flowers, temples in ruins, palaces with every beautiful ornament destroyed. Thank God that to most of us at least home means everything that is dear and precious. I remember when I was a boy being sent away to a boarding-school, and if ever a little fellow was home-sick I was. Oh, how I cried for

home! Every night, for weeks, I sobbed myself to sleep. I would have given anything if I could have run into my mother's arms. And why did I think so much of home? Oh, it was because there was so much love there. The very atmosphere was summer, and I longed to be in it as much as ever a flower languished for the reviving shower. If you were sent away among strangers, how your young hearts would yearn to get back again! "Home, sweet home; there is no place like home." And this is just what God is to all His children—a home, a place of love. Mother, father, wife, children, are but faint, faint images of God. He is the fountain of all their affection. There is no place in the universe so safe and so delightful.

Dear children, God is willing to become your home now. He is inviting each one of you to come to Him. As the little birds seek shelter and comfort under the parental wing, so may you under the broad and feathery pinions of your heavenly Father's love. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," and you are in God's bosom, in God's heart. The angels have not a richer, brighter, happier home than have they who believe. The moment you accept Christ as your Saviour, God becomes your habitation. How rich, and safe, and happy must they be who are living in God's heart! Oh, dear children, come! The door is open; the table is spread with everything that you can need; bright spirits are waiting to minister to your happiness. Come now and make God your home.—*Rev. B. D. Thomas. Pulpit Treasury.*

REVIEWS.

"**LIFE'S Battle in Temperance Armour,**" by Thomas Whittaker. Hodder and Stoughton.—This is a stirring narrative of the labours of one of the most noted veterans in the temperance cause. It bristles with vivid anecdotes of the struggles, difficulties, and dangers which accompanied the efforts of one of its best pioneers. It also clearly explodes the notion that the Gospel has been wanting in connection with those who were earliest in the field, and very conclusively demonstrates that it was the fault of those who professed to believe in the Gospel, because they stood aloof or, what was worse, opposed the efforts which were being made to remove out of the way the mightiest obstacle to its progress. To every earnest worker we say, Study the book, and tell its facts to those who yet doubt the Christianity of the early temperance reformers.

"Poke your own Fire and Burn your own Lamp." The remarkable

career of Councillor J. Devey, of Wolverhampton, by the Rev. T. Lowe.—This is a very striking story of what temperance has done in raising a man from ruin to a good position in society. We wish for it a wide circulation.

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“The National Thrift Almanack for 1885.”—This is a very clever composition, containing a thrift-proverb for every day but Sunday in the year. We are glad to find it is supplied by the Thrift Society, 1, Finsbury Circus, E.C., on special terms in quantities. It ought to be circulated by the thousand among the working classes.

“The Water-drinkers of the Bible,” by John W. Kirton, LL.D. National Temperance Publication Depôt.—When we say that this volume contains thirty-three chapters, each dealing with some prominent characters whose history is given in the Bible, and many of whom have been overlooked hitherto by most temperance people, we need not add that it forms an important addition to the standard works on temperance which have been issued by the League. It is full of hints, suggestions, and outlines, and will prove of immense service to speakers.

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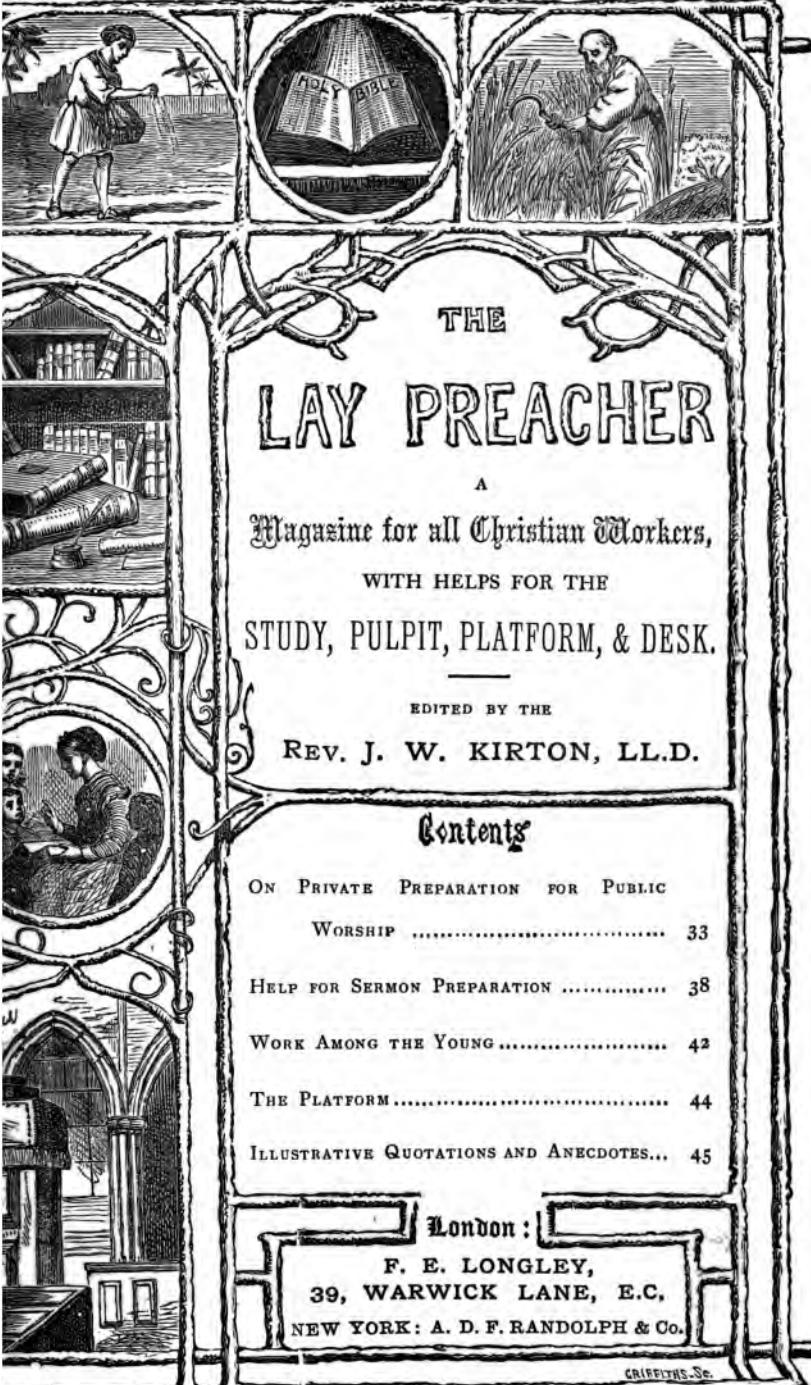
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THE LAY PREACHER.

ON PRIVATE PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP.

WE have three names for that one day which, by national consent, we set apart from other days. There is the name "Sabbath," of Jewish origin, and meaning "rest;" there is the "Lord's-day," of early Christian origin, and meaning the day which belongs to the Lord; there is the "Sunday," of heathen origin, and meaning the day on which the sun should be worshipped. Curiously enough, it is this heathen name that is in most constant use with us; and yet rationally enough, for our Lord was the "Light of the World," and of His coming it is written, "The people that sat in darkness saw a great light."

I take for granted that one day in seven should be devoted to our spiritual needs; that part of such devotion should consist in public worship, and also that it is one of our great griefs that our Sunday worship does not profit us as much as we might fairly expect. We often wonder why it is we do not carry away from such services more life, and strength, and hope in our hearts. Sometimes we are inclined to lay the fault on the minister; sometimes upon the conduct of the service; sometimes upon the subject, as treated in the sermon; sometimes upon the weather; sometimes upon our own mood of mind. All these reasons may have more or less reality in them; but I am sure, as in so many other things, the chiefest reason lies closest at home with ourselves. And I wish briefly to indicate a remedy for this almost universally felt shortcoming in our public services. There must be some kind of private preparation for public worship, if public worship is to be that efficient excellence which God has manifestly intended.

1. *That congregations must be led into a clear understanding of the nature of the act in which they are called to share.*

It is an exercise—emphatically a spiritual exercise. "Worship" is that high effort and satisfied sentence of the soul whereby we pronounce that God is worthy of all we can give. And how can we properly assert such worth, except by offering to Him our whole being, our thoughts, our feelings, our wills, our aspirations? and offering Him these, not as dead images, but as living faculties in full and proper potency. That is worship when we can sincerely, if not rapturously, say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power." And at such time we offer the best and most of our being to God. Observe, that we are *helped in this spiritual exercise by the building itself*. It is well that our churches should be of nobler architec-

ture than our private dwellings. Their lofty heights, massive steadfastness of pillaring, solemn and chastened decoration, do really assist the devotional feeling. And we all need to be reminded, in all possible ways, that there is a loftier, stronger, gracefuller life to which we must attain—a larger, lovelier, heavenlier spirit than we do as yet possess. We are *helped in worship by the order of our service*. This service, in its four chief portions of prayer, singing, reading, sermon, is not a disconnected heap of doings put together haphazard, as a gardener rakes into a heap the fallen leaves upon the lawn. Quite the contrary. It has a definite and well-established relationship to our nature as fallen, yet trusting creatures, who are on the way to God. It is welded together into one harmonious whole, like the sea of mingled fire and glass that lay before the throne. By its aid, AS A WHOLE, we come up into the presence of God.

There is *prayer*. We pour out our hearts in their confession of weakness, wickedness, foolishness, and failure; we call upon God to forgive, and to strengthen, and to bless.

This is a relief; and, being relieved, we can stand up to *sing*. Now our souls can lift themselves, and unfold their hidden wings of gladness. Now our gloom shall be chased away, as the evil spirit fled from Saul at the sound of David's harp.

Then there is *reading*. Having relieved and cheered the soul, we can now listen to God's speech. We can receive His word into the good soil of a prepared, sensitive heart, "Speak, Lord," we say, like Samuel in the Temple, "for Thy servant heareth."

Then there is the *sermon*. Having heard God, in His written Word, we can compose ourselves for a quiet, quickening, and always living word, from the lips of God's servant. It is good to listen to one who understands us and sympathises with us, whose hopes and fears, failures and successes, are cast in the mould of the age in which we live; it is good to permit ourselves to be moved by one whose face is set to the same sights, whose faith is tried by the same temptations as our own. Thus the four-fold exercise in this four-fold service makes one worship. Let us remember this. Worship is not a mere bodily presence, but a spiritual passionateness, quick and yearning.

2. This, then, being the nature of worship, *it is certain that our congregations should make some kind of solemn personal preparation before sharing in it*. The minister is expected to have taken all proper precautions of study and prayer, so that he may appear in the pulpit fitted to lead the devotions of the people. And this expectation is, of course, perfectly just. But is it sufficiently remembered that if there be a necessity for the minister to prepare to lead, there is equally a necessity for the congregation to 'prepare to be led?—that they also should

get ready for worship, not only in a bodily, external fashion, but also in a moral, internal one?

At present business is often so conducted that it does not cease till close on the Saturday's midnight; or if business is over early, then some pleasure is indulged in to an equally late hour. The whole family retire wearied to bed, and when the morning comes it is little wonder they lie there later than usual. There is nothing particular to be done to-day—only an attendance at public worship, and that does not begin till half-past ten or eleven o'clock. But the moments fly away unconsciously—it is later than they thought. They dress and breakfast in a hurry; they walk in a hurry, and they enter late and uncomfortable; vexed with themselves and a vexation to others. Or even if care has been taken to be in time, how often between the waking and the worship, thought and converse about all manner of trivial things has been freely indulged.

Between the Saturday's work and the Sunday's worship there should be a preparation. There should be for a little while in the morning a solitary retirement, a searching of the heart, a review of the past week, an onview at that which is already begun, a quickened sense of need for forgiveness from God, a restoration to Him, a solemn facing of the questions, "What am I?" "What ought I to be?" "What am I about to do?" If there be none of this, then, although the body is present and awake, the soul may be absent and asleep. It is no wonder so many people sit out the service unimpressed, and go away unimproved. They gave God no respect, and so He gave them no blessing. That a preparation of the heart and conscience would have its effect, is shown in the well-known fact that we are often more helped by the service in the evening than in the morning. It is so because we have made an unconscious preparation for it. We have been quieter and thoughtfuller during the day than usual. Our souls have had time to compose themselves, and so were able to receive the spiritual benefits that belong to the season.

3. Then, again, our congregations must learn to come to worship, *not merely as spectators and auditors, but most expressly as partakers and assisters in the service.* It is true that the direction of the worship is in the power of the minister; but the sustentation of that worship is in the power of all. I say nothing now concerning the presence of that outward stillness, and decorum, and solemnity which is required in devotion; this is too manifest to need notice. But our congregations must completely put off the notion that they are only just so many hearers and seers; and as completely put on the notion that everyone of them is a partaker and promoter, directly and personally concerned in sustaining the sensibilities and convictions of the

time. As things are, any person who is accustomed to watch our assemblies knows too well the restless posturing and wandering eyes at prayer, the supercilious criticism or stolid silence at singing, the ill-concealed weariness of the whole affair, even on the part of many well-disposed people. Everyone in our congregations must learn to bring to worship their portion of spiritual life, their interest, reverence, and, if possible, their love. They must participate in the prayer, following it, and acquiescing in it, as travellers follow their guide. If the prayer be a true prayer—*i.e.*, if it expresses the felt necessities of the heart, then those necessities are the common experience of all, and may be felt and followed by all. And when prayer is ended, it is from **THEIR** lips, and not from the minister's, that the Amen should proceed; the "Let it be so" of a multitude of satisfied souls. Equally so with the singing, and reading, and preaching. The people must identify themselves with the various portions of the whole service. They must bring their share of personal life, that it may energise and elevate that of the assembly. In order to do this, they should consider how much their heart and home experience during the week is fitted to furnish them for such effort. As they look back, how much have they to be thankful for! how much to be sorry for! how much to be strengthened by! how much to be weakened at! how much to be perplexed with! how much to be gladdened in! Oh, what a vast tribute of overflowing devotion do they all owe to God! They must come, then, bringing that devotion, and prepared to take their own part in adding it to the devotion of others. Worship cannot be done by deputy. Each one for ourselves, such is the unalterable law. Let all our assemblies feel that they are really implicated and identified in public worship, and we should cease to mourn its inefficiency. If they would draw nigh to God, He would draw nigh to them. There would be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. A real spiritual glory would fill the place, and the whole assembly would know that God was there.

4. In this preparing for worship the people should possess *an earnest assurance that they are there really in one of the best possible positions to be bettered spiritually*. Our congregations often assemble with a wistful feeling of uncertainty; a word *may* be spoken, a blessing *may* be given; but, then, perhaps not. They must have more faith. If I may so speak, the Holy Spirit of God intensifies Himself at such seasons and in such assemblies; and a blessing will surely be given if we will only expect it and accept it. "My word shall not return unto Me void." Where two or three disciples are gathered together Christ has promised to be present. And when many people are met together in one place in His name, there is something more

than a natural quickening of sympathy and emotion—there is the supernatural presence and power of the Spirit of the Lord Christ. He is brooding over every heart ; He is preparing even the darkest chaos for form and life and fruitfulness. He is there, waiting to be allowed to work. Only, without faith on the part of the people, how can He work ?

So long as our congregations come with a peradventure in their minds, so long Christ will be unable to do many mighty works, because of their unbelief—so long they will be lusting after John the Baptist revivals, forgetful that God is already with them, that “ His gentleness will make them great,” and that all that they have to do is to let Him work His work unhindered and ungrieved in their souls.

Made better morally and spiritually, somewhere and somehow—this we all must be. Life is not a game of chess, where men are pushed like carved figures from square to square of alternate black or white, and remain the same to the end. Our souls are not like the pawns, knights, and bishops of the chessboard, destined to pass through a chequered existence, and end the same as they began, only a little worse for wear. Not so. Our souls are to *grow* as they move—now in adversity, now in prosperity—but always to grow more and more loyal and intelligent in righteousness, till at last they checkmate their great adversary the devil, and win a battle which had so often seemed to go ruinously against them.

We must be made better, and public worship is one of the pledged seasons when such bettering may come to pass. Let our congregations clearly understand that the nature of public worship is a spiritual exercise ; let them privately and solemnly beforehand prepare to engage in it ; let them come expressly and decidedly as assisters in it ; let them be thoroughly convinced that God waits there to bless them of a truth ; and then, instead of mourning its inefficiency, and instead of coming away tired and disappointed, as we now too often do, we should leave the place as Moses left the mount of God, our very faces luminous with an impartation of Heavenly glory.

REV. A. NORRIS.

TRUTH IMMORTAL.—Many a form of truth, like the flesh-and-blood Christ, has to die that it may live more gloriously. Over and over again the old truth has to be sought on a higher level. We peer with dimmed eyes into the, alas ! we fear, empty grave ; while lo ! what we seek is risen, and still nearer to us than if lying swathed in finest linen in the sepulchre where we want to find it. Constantly is fulfilled the word, “ For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron.”

HELP FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

BETHESDA.

' In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.'—John v, 3.

I. THE POOL.

1. *Its name.* Bethesda : House of Mercy; applicable to the Gospel; the river which makes glad the city of God.

2. *Its virtues.* To heal all manner of sickness and disease. No evil which the Gospel cannot cure.

II. THE CAUSE OF ITS EFFICACY.

1. *An angel troubled the water.* So the Gospel must be rendered efficacious by the Holy Spirit.

2. *At a certain season.* The efficacy of the Gospel certain to all who seek its blessings. The Lord's Day, a gracious season. Many healed on that day.

3. *Those were benefited who stepped in immediately.* We must have personal application to the Gospel, use the means—do it *now*. To-day. *Now* is the accepted time.

III. THE CHARACTERS WHO RESORTED TO IT.

1. *Persons affected by various diseases,* halt, blind, &c.

2. *Multitudes.* Many are called, &c.

3. *They waited for a cure.* Some careless. Some anxious. Some earnest, &c.

PRAYER.

"Behold He prayeth."—Acts ix, 11.

1. PRAYER is a duty incumbent on all.

2. All should pray with sincerity.

3. With profound reverence.

4. With unlimited faith.

5. With ardent love.

6. Under a deep sense of unworthiness.

7. With a vivid realization of its privilege.

THE DAY OF SALVATION.

"Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."—
2 Cor. vi, 2.

1. *All mankind as sinners need salvation.*

2. *The Gospel reveals the only plan by which mankind can be saved.* There is no other name.

3. *The Gospel is adapted in every way to meet the necessities of man.* Provides Pardon—Purity—Deliverance.

4. *It is freely offered.*

- (a). Without any condition.
- (b). Or preparation.
- 5. *Its blessings are available at once.*
- 6. *If it is neglected there is no other remedy.* How shall we escape, &c.
- 7. *If it is accepted heaven is sure.*

THE FEAST OF ZION.

"And on this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."—Isaiah xxv, 6.

I. THE FEAST.

- 1. Plenty.
- 2. Variety.
- 3. Excellence.
- 4. Expense.
- 5. Joy and gladness.
- 6. Good company.

II. THE PROVIDER. "The Lord of Hosts."

- 1. Of Heaven.
- 2. Earth.

III. THE PARTAKERS. "All people."

- 1. Jews and Gentiles.
- 2. Rich and poor.
- 3. Wise and ignorant.
- 4. Free, without charge.

BAD TIMES.

"In the day of adversity, consider!"—Eccl. vii, 14.

I. CONSIDER—THE PERIOD TO WHICH THE SACRED WRITER REFERS.

- 1. A time of public calamity.
- 2. A time of public embarrassment.
- 3. A time of public bereavement.
- 4. A time of parental affliction.

II. THE SPECIAL DUTY ENFORCED. "Consider."

- 1. That our afflictions are of Divine appointment.
- 2. That it is our duty to submit.
- 3. That such afflictions are of the greatest importance.
- 4. That they are essential to our real happiness.
- 5. That the only source of real consolation is God.
- 6. That the design of such afflictions is to lead us to heavenly bliss.

TWO LESSONS:—

- 1. Awaken us to a sense of our depravity.
- 2. To impress us with a deep sense of the goodness of God.

THE IMPORTANT VOYAGE.

"And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land."—Acts xxvii, 44.

I. LIFE COMPARED TO A VOYAGE.

1. Its setting out is generally pleasant.
2. Attended with various changes.
3. Its duration uncertain.
4. Its results important.

II. THE VOYAGE OF LIFE IS ATTENDED WITH MANY DANGERS.

Storms—Quicksands—Hidden Rocks—Contrary Winds—Currents.

III. DEATH MAY BE COMPARED TO A SHIPWRECK.

1. The vessel destroyed.
2. The cargo lost.

IV. THERE IS A WAY OF ESCAPE.

1. An ark of safety is provided.
2. A promise is given.
3. Means are appointed to be used.

CHRIST'S SECOND APPEARANCE.

"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."—Heb. ix, 28.

I. THE GLORIOUS APPEARANCE OF THE SON OF GOD.

1. Its certainty—"He shall appear."
2. Its order—"second time."
3. Its manner—"without sin."
4. Its end—"into salvation."

II. THE PERSONS INTERESTED IN IT. Those who look for Him:—

1. With ardent love.
2. With earnest longing.
3. With patient waiting.
4. With due preparation.

WORK IN THE DAY.

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"—Mat. xx, 6.

VIEWING this question in a practical light it suggests:—

I. THERE IS A WORK TO DO.—Every man has a work to do of the greatest importance, a work pertaining to the soul and eternal realities. We are, in a sense, to work out our own salvation. Salvation has been procured by Christ's death, but it remains for us to secure it. God will do nothing for us we can do for ourselves. Before we can enter heaven we must be converted, born again. In order to do this we must:—

1. *Repent.* Repentance implies conviction, confession, and reformation. To repent is to turn round, cease to do evil, and learn to do

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well. Repentance has been enforced in all ages. Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Christ, Peter, and Paul urged it. To the unconverted we say in God's name, Repent.

2. *Believe.* Faith is necessary to salvation. Saving faith implies reliance as well as assent, trust as well as belief. Saving faith quits all other confidence, and rests the soul on Christ alone for salvation, and depends on Him for all the blessings of grace and glory. All who have been saved at all have been saved by faith. Faith in a Saviour promised was as efficacious in the old dispensation as faith in a Saviour given in the new dispensation. Abel, Enoch, and all the Old Testament saints found it to be so. Christ and the Apostles enjoined the necessity of faith. To the unconverted we would again say in God's name, *Believe.*

3. *When these terms of salvation are complied with you become new creatures ; are converted.* But there is still a work for you to do. You must seek the salvation and good of others around. You must live a consistent, holy, Christian life ; let your light shine ; distribute tracts ; teach in the Sunday School ; preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, &c., according to your ability. All can do something to extend Christ's kingdom. You are to a certain extent your brother's keeper, therefore don't leave him to perish. Come, take a living, loving, lively interest in trying to win souls. As you have opportunity, do good to all men.

II. THIS WORK IS TO BE DONE IN "THE DAY."—This may imply :—

1. *The day of grace.* While mercy is offered, the spirit is striving, friends are urging, and ministers are inviting you to seek the Lord. These constitute what may well be termed the day of grace. Such circumstances are favourable to religion. To ignore such privileges is exceedingly foolish. This state of things may terminate with you before death. You may form connections unfriendly to the claims of your soul, your hearts may grow hard, God's spirit may cease to strive. Therefore, in the day of your merciful visitation give attention to the things that pertain to your peace.

2. *The day of our natural life.* This may be a very short one. What is life at most ?

'Tis a delicate shell,
Flung up with eternity's,
On time's bank of quicksand to dwell,
And a moment its loveliness show.
Gone back to its element grand,
Is the billow that washed it on shore ;
Another is washing the strand
And the beautiful shell is no more.

"Life," says James, "is a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." However, it is the only period in which

heaven may be secured and hell shunned. There is no middle place for the purpose, no purgatory. If we would enjoy eternal felicity at God's right hand, we must in this day of our natural life repent, believe, and work for God. To-day God sets before us life and death, and says choose *now* life. Death closes upon the period of man's opportunities and the time of his probation here.

While life prolongs its precious light,
 Mercy is found, and peace is given ;
 But soon, ah ! soon, approaching night,
 Will blot out every hope of heaven.

III.—YOU ARE ASKED TO ASSIGN A REASON FOR YOUR IDLENESS.—“Why stand ye here all the day idle ?” You cannot plead want of work. The fields are white unto harvest. You cannot say you have never been called. You have been asked to enter upon the Lord's work often. Some of you were called early in the morning of your life, some at the third hour, some at the sixth hour, some at the ninth, and with some it is now the eleventh hour, and your work is not yet begun. “Why stand ye here all the day idle ?” The answer is, “Ye will not come unto me.” Christ says, “I would ye would not.”

J. WILKINSON.

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

BAD COMPANY.

“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise ; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”—Prov. xiii, 20.

If the wise are such as fear God—the foolish must be such as do not.

I. LOOK AT SOME OF THE MARKS BY WHICH THEY CAN BE KNOWN.

1. Beware of Flattering friends.
2. Beware of Dishonest friends.
3. Beware of Idle friends.
4. Beware of Evil-speaking friends.
5. Beware of Sabbath-breaking friends.

II. A FEW REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD AVOID THEM.

1. Because you might grow like them.
2. Because you might do as they do.
3. Because you might go where they will go at last.

III. SEEK THE BEST FRIENDS.

1. Seek Jesus, the best of friends.
2. Seek the friends of Jesus.
3. Value *good* friends.

GOD'S DEMAND OF THE HEART.

"My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways."—Prov. xxiii., 26.

I. THE RELATION IN WHICH GOD STANDS TO THOSE ADDRESSED.

1. He does not speak as to a stranger.
2. Nor as to an enemy.
3. Nor as to a slave.
4. But as to a son.

II. THE NATURE OF THE REQUEST.

1. God does not ask you to *lend* your heart.
2. Nor to *sell* Him your heart.
3. But to *give* Him your heart.

It must be a free surrender. Gold cannot *buy* love. Fear cannot *compel* love. Must consecrate body, soul, spirit, willingly, cheerfully.

III. TO WHOM MUST THE SURRENDER BE MADE.

1. Not to the world.
2. Not to the devil.
3. Nor to be kept by yourself.
4. Give *Me* thine heart.

IV. WHAT ARE YOU TO GIVE.

1. Not property.
2. Not the body.
3. But your heart. " 'Tis all that I can do."

THE ANGRY CLOUD : A PARABLE FOR CHILDREN.

By BENJAMIN GODFREY, M.D.

It was a sultry afternoon in August. The wind blew in gentle gusts ; the frightened birds hurried home to their nests ; and all nature was awed into a melancholy silence. The dark stillness of the day, the prelude to a thunder-storm, was here. Earth seemed affrighted as the shadow of the thick cloud passed over. Black and angry it looked, and it scowled as it hovered over the town. It is moving onward to the old church, with a stern determination to lay the noble structure in ruins. The swallows rushed around their old friend, shrieking with fear, and flying low, near to the ground, so that their fall should be less if the storm should strike them down. The jackdaws cawed a solemn prayer, as if they thought their hour was come.

"I'll smite thee to the earth," said the cloud, as it threw one of its fiery darts into the surrounding air, and thundered loudly, as if to intimidate the old tower.

"Why? What evil have I done to thee, O mighty cloud, that thou shouldest be angry?" said the church.

"You proud, uplifted, stony, hard-hearted thing, you shall be laid low. How dare you raise your towering head above the town? How dare you sing songs high up near mid-heaven with those noisy bells of yours? One flash from my quiver, and you shall lie a heap of ruins."

"Friend storm, please listen. I am high, 'tis true; but it is that all men may look up to me; that I may convey the aspirations of my earth-born family nearer heaven; that they may look up from groveling cares to where my steeple points, and soar far beyond; that they might have rest unto their souls."

"And is that thy mission? Is there no pride in thy heart?" said the cloud, a little softened.

"No, friend! My pride is that all men should look beyond me; that when you and I are gone, they shall live for ever."

While the steeple spoke the cloud began to weep. Its aspect became changed, and its anger faded away, and amidst its swiftly-falling tears it smiling said: "O steeple, blessed being! In anger I came to destroy thee; but your kind answer has turned away all my wrath, and I weep as a child."

By the side of the steeple was a lightning conductor, which silently and unassumedly drew off the electricity from the cloud, and converted the storm into a genial shower. How much can be done by a little thing. A little prayer, a tiny whisper, a heaven-born sigh, is more potent than the sword of the warrior or the booming cannon.

"Blessed cloud!" said the church; "to-morrow the townsfolk will look upwards and thank God for this refreshing rain."

THE PLATFORM.

HELP ONE ANOTHER.

A TRAVELLER who was crossing the Alps was overtaken on the summit of one of the highest mountains by a violent snow-storm. The air became darkened, the cold grew intense, and an icy wind penetrated his very bones. For some time he was able to struggle against the storm, but at length his strength forsook him, his limbs became benumbed, and an overpowering lethargy crept gradually over him. His feet seemed to be rooted to the spot, and, incapable of resisting the fatal sleep which creeps over those lost in the snow, he lay down, as it appeared, never to rise again. Suddenly, at that very moment, he became aware that at a short distance from him another traveller was vainly endeavouring to drag himself along, seeming, if possible, even more to be pitied than himself. This unknown traveller could with difficulty move; his limbs were frozen and stiff. He was at the point of sinking.

At the sight of this unfortunate man the traveller, exhausted as he was and ready every moment to fall asleep, made a great effort to rouse himself. He got up, dragged himself to where the dying man lay, and strove to aid his companion in misfortune. He took the poor man's hands into his own, and endeavoured all he could to bring back a little life into them. He rubbed his temples, chafed his feet, and exerted himself by every means in his power to restore circulation to his benumbed body, while in the meantime he kept addressing to him soothing words of hope and of encouragement.

His efforts met their recompense. The apparently dying man regained by degrees his strength, and became capable at length of rising and continuing his journey. But that was not all. The benevolent traveller had been reviving *himself* by his generous efforts, and in saving his companion's life he saved his own also. The blood again began to flow freely in his body, he again grew warm, and the torpor and drowsiness disappeared.

The two travellers resumed their journey, happy and thankful at having been delivered from so great a peril. The tempest grew calm, and they were able to cross the mountain without meeting with any other accident.

Christian! when thou feelest thy soul cold and languid, do something to awaken or to reanimate some soul near thee. Force thyself to do good to thy neighbour, and to help *him* to rejoice: for that will be the best means of bringing warmth to thine own poor soul.

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

THE life of a pious minister is visible rhetoric.—*Hooker.*

HOW TO WORK.—Let us do the little portion set us of the world-wide and age-long work of God, and then fall asleep in the spirit of one who wrote these last words in his diary the night before he was suddenly called home to be no more seen: "There are works which by God's permission I would do before the night cometh, but, above all, let me mind my own personal work, keep myself pure and zealous and believing, labour to do God's will, yet not anxious that it should be done by me rather than by others, if God disapproves of my doing it." Be this our spirit in life and in death, and toil itself shall be rest ere the long rest comes.—*Dean Vaughan.*

WHATEVER be the frame of our minds, and whatever service we render unto God, we are invariably to fix our thoughts on the atonement of Christ, as the only means whereby our persons or our services can find acceptance with God.—*George Bush.*

FAITH AND DOUBT.—A pious man went one day to consult a good French Archbishop on the state of his soul. "I am a great sinner," he exclaimed; "and though I pray God without ceasing to grant me light and faith, doubt on doubt is continually rising up in my mind. Surely, if I were not a reprobate, God would not suffer me to be so tormented by the enemy of souls." The bishop replied to his visitor in these words: "The King of France has two strong castles in very opposite positions. The tower of Monthéry is in a part of the country where no danger is to be feared. But the fortress of Rochelle is situated upon the sea coast, and is constantly threatened by the approach of some enemy. Of the governors of those two castles, which do you think the king cares and thinks most about?" "No doubt, sir," replied the poor man, "his Majesty esteems most highly the governor who has the hardest task, and who, in the greatest dangers, shows the most courage." "You are quite right," replied the bishop. "Apply that idea to your own position and mine—my heart, less tormented by doubts, is the fortress of Monthéry, yours is the castle of Rochelle."—*From the French, translated by "Janet."*

CONSCIENCE.—The voice of conscience is a gentle voice—gentle as the voice of a mother. It is so still and quiet that we are ready to say, "Can this be a voice of authority, a Divine voice within us?" It is even so. The voice of the Judge—the voice which shall be as the sound of many waters, which shall roll awfully like thunder, filling the everlasting heavens—that voice will be but as the very echo of the most inaudible voice of conscience. In this world the gentle mother's voice of conscience often becomes feebler and feebler, till it passes into a moan, and then conscience dies. It is as if a man's dying mother said to him, "Oh, do not this thing that I hate." But he turned coldly away; whereas, had he softened and wept, he would have given life to his mother—she would have revived, to counsel and to care for him.—*Lynch.*

CONFIDENCE.—Tennyson, in his ode on the burial of the Duke of Wellington, says of England's hero—

Whatever record leap to light,
He never shall be shamed.

WHATEVER speculative interest the question of another probation may have for others, it has none whatever for me. I have a sufficient season of grace, and by God's good help I mean to use it for my salvation.—*Dr. Deems.*

THE surest method of arriving at a knowledge of God's eternal purposes about us is to be found in the right use of the present moment. Each hour comes with some little faggot of God's will fastened upon its back.—*F. W. Faber.*

THE SIN OF DOING NOTHING.—The sin which Christ most frequently denounces, with one exception, of which we are now speaking, is the sin of doing nothing. It is the sin of the rich man, of whom no ill is recorded, except that a poor man lay at his gate and received no sympathy or comfort. It is the sin to which the easy, the wealthy, the prosperous, are constantly tempted. It is the sin, or the virtue, as we sometimes call it—of letting well enough alone, of not meddling in other men's matters, of trusting that Providence will find a way for escape. That old maxim of ecclesiastical wisdom, "to let things go as they are going," has a kind of prudence of this world, of prudence in one sense, but in all higher senses a rashness how portentous! To let things go as they are going, to let this vast population go on increasing, multiplying, with no retaining, regenerating influences, uncontrollable, unmanageable, illimitable as the sea in its strength, as the fire in its fury, to let this huge train of human society, with all its precious freight of human lives and souls, rush on toward the chasm which lies before it, to let it pass, because perchance it will last our day, because we have not taken the trouble to look ahead or go forward with the signal of danger, or repair the broken line which it has to traverse: this neglect, this indifference is, as we say, only negligence, only indolence, only want of forethought. But oh! with what tremendous consequences, with what crash of hopes and lives, even in the smaller spheres of human duty! with what still greater crashes, sooner or later, in the history of nations! All honour to anyone who has the courage at least to look the peril in the face, to wave the danger flag, to discern that old maxim so popular in the days of old, to "go before His flock" in the true spirit of the Good Shepherd, if with no other purpose, at least to show what is to be done, what to be feared, what to be hoped.—*Dean Stanley.*

FAITH is the root of all blessings. Believe, and you shall be saved. Believe, and you must needs be satisfied. Believe, and you cannot but choose but be comforted and happy.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

THE only effectual cure of unbelief is to *act*. Every step towards Christ kills a doubt. Every thought, word, and deed for Him carries you away from discouragement.—*Theodore L. Cuyler.*

THE true Christian is like the sun, which pursues his noiseless track, and everywhere leaves the effect of his beams in a blessing upon the world around him.—*Luther.*

To attempt to serve God without love is like rowing against the tide. But love oils the wheels and makes duty sweet. The angels are swift-winged in God's service, because they love Him. Jacob thought seven years but little for the love he had for Rachel. Love is never weary.—*Watson.*

ALL we want in Christ we shall find in Christ. If we want little, we shall find little. If we want much, we shall find much; and if in utter helplessness we cast our all on Christ, He will be to us the whole treasury of God.—*Bishop Whipple.*

SUFFERING.—To give strength in suffering is the peculiar glory of Christ. St. Felicitas—being seized with the pangs of childbirth as she lay in prison awaiting the hour of martyrdom—filled the prison with her moans. One who stood by said, “If you cry thus now, what will you do when being torn by the wild beasts?” “What I now suffer,” she replied, “I suffer for nature; but when I am with the lions I shall suffer for Christ!”

THE first place Paul preached at in Europe was a riverside, the second in a dungeon at midnight. Truly God is not confined to temples built with hands.—*McDuff.*

NOTHING else is to be called the business of life at all. I am extreme, you may think; but this is liberty and life to me—to know Christ.—*George Macdonald.*

BELIEVERS may grieve the Spirit; unbelievers resist Him. The grieving may be unconscious; the resisting is always conscious.—*Andrew Bonar.*

THE man who has in him the elements of a worker for Christ will find a field or make one. Paul, when a prisoner, made converts in Cæsar's household.—*Spurgeon.*

FAITH, though weak, is still faith; a glimmering taper, if not a glowing torch, but the taper may give light as truly as the torch, though not so brightly.—*H Muller.*

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THE COMMANDMENT OF LOVE—ITS OLDNESS AND ITS NEWNESS.

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which is true in Him and in you."—1 John i, 7, 8.

THESE words stand between two commandments—that in the sixth verse, to walk as Christ walked, and the commandment of brotherly love contained in verse the ninth. To which of these does the apostle refer here? To both, for in their deepest meaning the two are one. If we walk in the light as Christ walked, then shall we love our brethren, for He loved us and gave Himself for us. The most observable fact in the life and character of our Lord, that which made Him worthy to be called "The Son of God," attracted and subdued the hearts of His disciples, and has imparted fragrance to His memory during all these Christian centuries, and has made His name the greatest power in the history of the world, is His wonderful love to men. Therefore, to walk as He walked is to live in the element of love. This is the true light. On the other hand, one of the chief elements in the darkness of this world, of which the Scriptures speak so often, is the absence of this love. St. Paul knew the people of his time well; he had mingled much with them, travelled far, seen the ways of Jews and Gentiles; and having observed the method of their life, his sorrowful, bitter testimony was "All seek their own," are mindful of themselves only, their constant employment is the enclosing and securely hedging a small paradise, in which they alone are to dwell, regardless of their brethren who live in the outside desert. They blow hard and long to kindle a fire that shall make and keep themselves warm; but all besides may shiver in the cold winter blasts till time shall be no more. They "seek their own," are narrow, ungenerous, loveless, selfish.

Having ascertained what the commandment is, let us consider the two things mentioned concerning it—its OLDNESS and its NEWNESS.

"I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning." The precept of love existed from the beginning of the Gospel. St. John was now an aged man, writing to his friends from the borders of heaven, the world of truth, purity, and love. In his youth he was hot and vehement, and would have called down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans; but years, which bring with them thoughtfulness, wisdom, and forbearance, had produced in him a great change—the fierceness of the

narrow-minded Jew had been cast out, and he was now a calm, large-hearted, and loving man. "God is love," he said; Christ is the manifestation of the Divine love, religion is love; and he was never tired of teaching the duty and blessedness of this love. But in doing this he guarded his hearers and readers against thinking that the great commandment originated with him. "I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning;" when you first heard the Gospel, that commandment was made known to you.

The precept of love was given also in the Moral Law. That law contains ten commandments; but they may all be reduced to this, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." There was another law in Israel having reference to sacrifices, sacred seasons, and sacred places, and the outward ceremonies of religion. Their religion thus consisted of an inward principle and an external form—the spirit and the letter. The Jews were more careful to observe the rites of the law of forms than to live according to the love of the Moral Law; and hence they became narrow-minded, superstitious, and selfish. Obedience to the golden precept of love would have made them one among themselves, given them national strength and dignity, secured to them the protection of God, and brought upon them the benedictions of Heaven; but by neglecting the "old commandment" they brought ruin upon themselves, for without love, from which spring truth, justice, generosity, and all nobleness of character, nations cannot continue to exist.

If we go farther back still, we shall find the ancient commandment in existence, for the law of love is as old as human nature itself. "God created man in His own image"—gave him a spiritual nature, possessed of the powers of thought, will, conscience, imagination, and the faculty of goodness or love. Two things should be noticed with regard to the last of these. First, the faculty of love belongs to him as man—is part of his nature. Treat the flower rightly, plant it where the sun-rays play, and it will grow and become beautiful, and will fill the surrounding atmosphere with its fragrance, for it is made to give itself away; and if man had been true to himself, if he had avoided sin, and lived in all his faculties, his goodwill and love would have gone forth to his fellows as naturally as perfume from the flower. Second, the sense or feeling that love is right, that it is a duty; and that to hate others, or even to be indifferent to them, is wrong. This is the Divine testimony in man's conscience, the "old commandment" of the Gospel and of the law in another form—a silent commandment which makes itself heard and felt without the use of words.

But the precept of love is *new* as well as old. It was Christ Him-

self that first called it new. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Why was this done? What is there new in the commandment as it is made known in the Gospel?

The prominence and oneness which our Lord gave to it made it new. It was not expressed as a precept in the moral law, but only implied. The commandments of that law resemble the figures in some large and splendid painting, and love is the background upon which they are formed, and without which they could not be there at all. But not so in the Gospel; Christ reduced all commandments to *one*. He said in effect, The meaning of all laws, rules of life, and commandments, is *love*. Let love possess your heart; have *that* in you like a living fountain, and all virtues and graces shall result therefrom—you will be true, pure, generous, sympathising, and godly men.

The perfect realisation of the precept of love in the life of Christ was new. The principle was in the law; but there it remained, the people did not embody it in their lives and characters. It was also in the conscience; but other powers stood in its way, and love had to bear its testimony unseen and in silence. But the Saviour made it a living, visible reality. It filled His Spirit, possessed His soul, appeared in His words and works, and was made manifest for ever in His sorrow and death. He did justice to love, honoured it, and showed how beautiful, how noble, and how divine a quality it is: and thus the old commandment was arrayed in new glory.

The old precept of love has also a new inspiring power, as seen in the life and character of our Lord. The law had no power to kindle the fire of love in the hearts of its disciples. The people read the commandments, admired their exalted morality, and received them as words spoken by Jehovah to His servant Moses; and yet they disobeyed them. But what the law could not do Christ has done a thousand times. His love reproduced itself in all His apostles; for their hearts yearned to do good to men, and the moving power of their life was an unspeakable desire to bless the world. The law demanded love, and could do no more; Christ also commanded His disciples to love, and with the commandment gave the disposition and ability to obey. When He told the man to stretch forth his withered hand, He imparted the necessary energy for him to do so; and in like manner He inspired the minds of His disciples with the power and the will to fulfil the precept of love; and this was a new feature in the old commandment.

Again, Christ made love the symbol or badge of the Christian Church. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." The Jew was known by the rites and the

religious forms which he observed ; that was the symbol which distinguished him from others. Schools of philosophers have been known by the names of great masters of thought who gave new impetus and direction to the minds of men. Armies go forth to battle with some particular banner streaming in the wind. The nations of the earth have their " flags," which are the emblems of their power. The Roman Church exhibits the figure of the cross as a sign of what she is. But our Lord placed the distinction in the *love* of His disciples. It is not by any system of theology, the sacraments of religion, the mysterious apostolical succession, forms of worship, learning, connection with the State, or social position, that the true Church is known ; but by brotherly kindness, generosity, magnanimity, sympathy, good works, and all that is implied in the great word *love* as it is used in the New Testament. Where these fruits grow, there is the garden of the Lord—the paradise which He has planted.

There is an undying freshness in love which makes it ever new. Consider the working of love anywhere, and you will find in it a beauty that never fades, a newness that never withers, a fragrance that never falls. Behold it in the faithfulness of friends who help, and cheer, and protect each other amid the storms of life ; see it in the family, where it beams in the faces of husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and in the mother, as she clasps her afflicted, helpless infant to her bosom, and in the mourner, as his tears fall into the open grave over which he stands ; regard it in the philanthropist, who sacrifices himself for the good of others, and in the benevolent efforts of the Christian Church to educate the ignorant, provide for the poor, comfort the sick, and to cheer the hearts of the dying ; and in all places, under all conditions, and in all circumstances love is comely, fresh, inspiring, and divine. Old we say it is ; old as the Gospel ; old as the law of Sinai ; old as the nature of man ; and old as eternity, for " God is love." And yet it is new—new as the smile of some dear friend who has returned after a long absence—new as the spring of the year, which fills the earth with joy ; new as the last morning that opened upon the world.

REV. THOMAS JONES.

Swansea.

A SPRING SERVICE.

" The time of the singing of birds is come."—Canticles ii, 12.

THE voice of man halts in the storm. Christ was in full sympathy with the natural world. The wise men of the East threw down at His feet all the bloom and the redolence of orchard and garden. Gladness on all sides that spring has come. Rejoice !

I. LEARN FIRST THE GOODNESS OF GOD.—Do you realize the mercy of the Lord in the dominant colour of the spring-time—the green in which is so kindly and lovingly mingled the mercy and the goodness of God? All things praise Him. At early sunrise Nature goes to morning prayers reading the 148th Psalm. Is our voice silent?

II. THIS SEASON SUGGESTS THE WISDOM OF GOD.—Oh, the wisdom of God in the structure of a bird's wing and voice! Where is the harp that gave the warble to the lark, the sweet call to the robin, the carol to the canary, the chirp to the grasshopper? He who pairs the birds in the spring-time gave us our companions. He who shows the chaffinch how to take care of her brood will protect our children. He who gathers the down for the pheasant's breast will give us apparel. Praise His name!

III. THE SEASON OF THE YEAR SUGGESTS THE WISDOM OF RIGHT BUILDING OF THE HOME NEST.—Birds build always in reference to safety. Sometimes the nest is built in rocks, eaves, trees, but always in reference to safety. The only safe place for man to build a nest is the tree of the cross, and the only safe rock is the Rock of Ages. Men gather round them all the luxuries of life and think they have all they need. But the tide turns. They have built their nest too high, and God shoves them out of it. Other men find their chief delight in sensuality. They defy God and the retributions of eternity. But after awhile the bestial carousal ends in infinite darkness. The nest was built too low and God dragged them out of it.

IV. THIS SEASON OF THE YEAR SUGGESTS THE INFINITE GLORIES OF HEAVEN.—If this world, blasted with sin and swept with storms, is still so beautiful, what must be the attraction of the sinless world toward which we travel! The tameness of earth exchanged for the yellow of jasper, and the blue of sapphire, and the green of emerald, and the fire of jacinth.

V. THIS SEASON OF THE BIRD-ANTHEM SUGGESTS THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING HOW TO SING.—In a little while there will be no pause in the melody of the song. Whether it be a warble, or a chant, or a carol, or a chirp, or a croak God will be praised by it. Shall not we, more intelligent appreciators, sing? Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart unto the Lord.—*Dr Talmage.*

EXTRAORDINARY afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins, but sometimes the trials of extraordinary graces.—*Matthew Henry.*

HELP FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

THE DUTY OF GROWING IN HOLINESS.

"Ye shall be holy ; for I the Lord your God am holy."—Lev. xix, 2.

1. THE moral character of man ought to resemble the moral character of God.
2. God is holy.
3. Therefore man ought to be holy.

CHRIST IS WAITING.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock," &c.—Rev. iii, 20.

1. Who knocks without ?
2. What is His errand ?
3. Why is not the door opened ?

CHRIST OUR WISDOM.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i, 30.

1. HE is the righteousness in which it is our wisdom to believe.
2. He is the sanctification for which it is our wisdom to strive and suffer.
3. He is the redemption in which it is our wisdom to hope and rejoice.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke xv, 11-32.

1. The history of us all.
2. A warning for us all.
3. An encouragement for us all.

OUR CHANGE.

"Till my change come."—Job xiv, 14.

1. It *may be* a sudden change.
2. It *will be* a great change.
3. It *should be* a joyful change.

LOVE TO THE HOUSE OF GOD.

"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy honour dwelleth."—Psalm xxvi, 8.

REASONS why David loved the house of God :—

1. Because of what he saw there.
 1. Victims slain (typical of Christ).
 2. A worshipping assembly.

3 The glory of God.

II. Because of what he **HEARD** there.

1. The praises of saints.

2. Promises made to them.

3. Predictions of the extent of Christ's Kingdom.

III. Because of what he **FELT** there.

1. Deep humility.

2. Fervent charity.

3. Ardent love to Jehovah.

IV. Because of what he **EXPECTED** there.

1. Freedom from sin.

2. Complete victory over enemies.

THREE LESSONS.—(1) Believers love the house of God ; (2) mere attendance is insufficient ; (3) if we do not delight in the house of God *now*, we shall not enjoy Heaven.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Luke xvi, 19-31.

THIS parable depicts the wrath to come. It was delivered with a view to make the scoffing Pharisees serious. Let us contrast Dives and Lazarus :—

I. IN LIFE.—Dives was rich (ver. 19). He had all that heart could wish, that money could purchase, or this world could afford. There is no sin in being wealthy, provided our possessions be rightly used. Abundance is always accompanied by temptation, which if yielded to becomes sin. Bodily indulgence may lead to the loss of the soul. Feasting ourselves and others to the neglect of the needy is a damning sin. Wealth alone cannot secure salvation.

Lazarus was poor and afflicted (ver. 20). He was covered with sores and forced to beg. It is not said the rich man denied the beggar's request, but that he did not relieve him so fully as he ought is implied. The dogs, better fed than Lazarus, and more sympathetic than their master, licked his sores, which might aggravate or relieve the sufferer's pain.

II. IN DEATH.—Both died. Death is common to all. Rich and poor must meet in the grave.

Yes, death is just, impartial, and sure,
The rich and the poor to his sceptre must bow ;
The black and the white are alike in his sight,
And to the house for the living appointed must go.
Riches cannot bribe him, or poverty put him to shame,
Or colour affright him, or cause him one moment his blow to restrain ;
But that all-powerful conqueror, that merciless king,
Visiteth all men as one and the same.

The beggar died first and was relieved from his ills. Then the rich man died and was buried. It is not said Lazarus was buried. Probably his carcase was taken as a nuisance, and cast into an old pit just outside the town. No doubt the rich man was buried in great pomp, and according to the fashion of that day.

III. IN ETERNITY.—Dives in hell, in misery. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, in happiness. In vain Dives pleaded for a mitigation of his suffering, through the very person he had previously despised. His memory was stirred by a reference to the experience of himself and Lazarus in this world. "Son, remember," would be cutting words. At death the eternal destiny of man is fixed. There is a great gulf fixed between the glorified and the lost. The gulf is impassable, so that the saints cannot relieve the damned, or the lost force their way out of hell.

Despairing of relief himself, he began to intercede for his brethren. The lost don't want company in hell. Company there will only intensify the torment. No prayer of the lost can be answered. Abraham said, "They have Moses," &c. (ver. 29), and intimated that Lazarus could not speak more plainly. Dives thought a special messenger would be more impressive to them. But Abraham said, "Neither," &c. (ver. 31).

Learn from this subject that—

1. God has given us a Divine Revelation.
2. God's Revelation presses upon our attention a place of comfort and a place of torment, *i.e.*, a Heaven and a Hell.
3. God's Revelation is sufficient to guide us to the place of comfort, Heaven.
4. If we do not regard that Divine Revelation, we need not expect any special miracle will be wrought to bring about our conversion.

J. WILKINSON.

LIFE AND DEATH.

"I have set before you life and death."—Deut. xxx, 19.

I. THE text suggests that man is a free-will agent. He has power to choose good and refuse evil.

II. That every man has a fair chance of salvation. Life and death, things that pertain to salvation, are set before him.

III. That God takes a special interest in our welfare. He exhorts us to choose life that we and our seed may live.

J. W.

CHRIST'S LOVE FOR PENITENTS.

"Go tell Peter."—Mark xvi, 7.

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PRAISE MEETINGS.

BY REV. HENRY STORER TOMS.

I ADVOCATE meetings for Psalmody practice after the Sunday evening service, and desire to give a few practical details that may be serviceable to anyone wishing to adopt the plan, or, at least, to give it a trial.

The praise meeting is held in the church, in order that the organ, where it is used in public worship, may accompany the singing in the usual manner; and also that the devotional spirit, so likely to be influenced by a change of place, may be maintained. A further reason is, that the numbers remaining to the meeting are found to be considerably larger in the church than in the lecture-room.

The ordinary Sunday evening service is closed in the usual way, and a brief interval is allowed, during which any persons who may wish to retire can do so, and the occupants of the galleries descend, and take their seats in the area. In some instances there is a general re-arrangement of the congregation, particular positions being assigned to the various "parts"—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.

The minister can hardly be expected to understand the conduct of the meeting. By the time it commences he has usually done as much as an ordinary man can do with comfort to himself or profit to others. There are, of course, extraordinary men who, after conducting the Sunday's public worship, will have the strength and the ability to undertake this engagement also. As a rule, however, the duty devolves upon one of the deacons or some gentleman of musical taste and culture, appointed by the church. A very great deal depends upon getting the right man for a conductor. He should know what music is best adapted for congregational singing, and be willing to take the trouble of making a careful selection beforehand, and suspending a copy of the programme on the church notice-boards before the morning service. He should

see that there is a proper supply of words and music for the congregation, and that every person is provided with these most necessary articles. Above all, he should show, by being regularly at his post and throwing a real interest into the proceedings, that the work is with him a labour of love.

Let it be distinctly understood that the prime object of these meetings is "to sing praise to our God," and that the people are to be taught, above all things, to sing with the spirit and with the understanding also, making melody in their heart to the Lord. But this will not preclude the correction of faults and the suggestion of improvements in the mode of rendering the music. It is quite possible to sing a hymn, or chant a psalm a second time at the bidding of the conductor, and, while endeavouring to conform to his directions as to the music, use the words as the vehicle of the heart's truest and warmest emotions. The danger of producing the impression of a mere singing-class, and this is a danger no doubt, must be guarded against; for such an impression speedily banishes the spirit of worship. The people soon find, however, that the more correctly they sing, the more perfectly does the music serve to convey the feelings suggested by the words. There is a marvellous delight in interpreting with exactness the deep utterances of true music. The praise-meeting unites instruction with worship. Through it new tunes and chants are introduced at the ordinary services, and by degrees an improvement in the church psalmody is effected. The "traditional drawl" disappears, and the service of praise is characterised by proper animation, heartiness, and effect.

It may be asked, How frequently should these praise-meetings be held? To which I reply, It will all depend upon circumstances. In some churches a prayer-meeting is held after evening service. In such a case I would suggest that the prayer-meeting and praise-meeting should be held alternately. In my own church the Lord's Supper is celebrated once a month after evening service, and a prayer-meeting is held once a quarter. Except on these evenings the praise-meeting has so far been held every Sunday. Perhaps it would be well to hold them somewhat less frequently in the summer, and to make a break of a few weeks in autumn. But each church will make its own regulations as experience dictates.

The meetings must not be too protracted. Practically it is found that half-an-hour is quite long enough, especially when the meetings are held frequently. Nor must they be late. To prevent this it is found advisable to shorten the preceding service somewhat, a step which might often be taken with advantage when no praise-meeting *was to follow*. Where service begins at half-past six o'clock, the

praise-meeting should commence not later than a quarter to eight. Praise-meetings thus conducted have proved very attractive wherever they have been instituted. A large proportion of the congregation remains to take part in them, and in some cases the attendance at the evening service exhibits a considerable increase.

The only objection to these meetings which seems to me worth noticing is that they must tend to weaken, if not efface, whatever good impressions the service and sermon may have made upon the minds of the people. But admitting, for a moment, that such an effect were produced, we must remember that the impression has usually been made on the minds of but a few. May not the hymns sung at the after meeting impress others who remained unmoved at the service? But I do not believe that impressions are thus effaced. On the contrary, what more likely to deepen them than lingering in the house of God, and listening to, if not uniting in, the adoration and praise of the great God and our Saviour, instead of immediately leaving its sacred precincts, and joining in the conversation of unsympathetic companions? A hymn or a psalm has often been found to furnish full and most blessed expression to emotions and yearnings previously undefined, and so to give definiteness to holy purpose and resolve.

SIDE LIGHTS.

WORKING FOR GOD. (Ps. cxxiii, 2.)—A sculptor was employed to erect a statue in one of the Grecian temples, and on being asked why he carved the back part, which was to be let into the wall, with as much pains as he did the front, he replied, "The gods see it."—*Maurice.*

THE MONOPOLY OF IDOLATRY. (Acts xvii, 16.)—Travellers tell us that there is a tribe in Africa so given to superstition that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that they do not even leave room for their families. How many men there are who fill their hearts with idols of sin, so that there is no room for the living God, or for any of His holy principles!—*John Bate.*

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM. (John viii, 36.)—Jesus Christ not only called Lazarus into life, but He commanded the grave clothes to be taken off him, that he might have liberty in life. Life without liberty from the grave clothes would scarcely have been a blessing. So Jesus Christ not only gives life to the soul which believes in Him, He also commands the Spirit to descend upon him to set him free from all enslaving habits. "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—*John Bate.*

AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY. (Heb. xii, 26, 27.)—The shock that

buried Lisbon in 1755 never ceased to vibrate till it reached the wilds of Scotland and the vineyards of Madeira. It was felt among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and it changed the level of the solitary lakes that sleep beneath the shadow of the North Alps. Even so the shock that Satan's kingdom sustained when Christianity was established will not cease to vibrate till it move the whole world.—*Hardwicke.*

SUN AND MOON STANDING STILL. (Joshua x, 13.)—We do not bow down before the glorious sun that rolls over us, nor before the moon that enlightens by night, but we are not free from the sin of bowing down to idols of our own and erecting gods within our hearts as contrary to the spirit of truth as those which these Amorites worshipped of old. How necessary that we should examine ourselves and see that our hearts are as pure from idolatry as our creed is from the acknowledgment of false deities! We must be as uncompromising in casting away, "to the moles and to the bats," the idols we set up within the shrines of our affections as it was necessary for them to be, who were brought from the darkness of idolatry in casting away "their dumb idols and turning to the living God." For we shall find by an inevitable law, a law resulting from the operation of God's power in every instance, as, indeed, all laws are, that if we will worship that which He hath commanded not to be worshipped instead of Himself, He will make those very objects the means of our spiritual destruction, and cause us "to be ashamed of the oaks which we have planted and be confounded for the gardens we have chosen." For thus saith the Lord by the mouth of His prophet Isaiah, "For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth and as a garden that hath no water."—*Rev. Henry Christmas.*

THE REWARD OF GODLY OBEDIENCE. (Ps. xix, 11.)—An esteemed clerk in a New York bank was requested by the president, one Saturday afternoon, to come to the bank the next day and help bring up the back work. To yield to the request would be to violate the Sabbath, and he refused. The president insisted, and threatened to discharge him. Still he refused, and was discharged, with no prospect of further employment, yet with an approving conscience. Shortly after a new bank was organized, and a trusty man was wanted for cashier. The same bank president offered to name a man who, sooner than sin, gave up his place; and then told the story of his discharged clerk. The nomination was at once accepted, and the upright clerk was rewarded with a higher position and an increased salary.

THE INVISIBLE GOD. (Exod. xxiii, 20.)—It presented a difficulty to the mind of the Emperor Trajan that God should be everywhere and yet not be seen by mortal eye. "You teach me," said the

Emperor, on one occasion, to Rabbi Joshua, "that your God is everywhere; and you boast that He resides among your nation. I should like to see Him." "God's presence is indeed everywhere," said the Rabbi, "but He cannot be seen. No mortal eye can behold His glory." The Emperor insisted. "Well," said Joshua, "but suppose we go first and look at one of His ambassadors." The Emperor assented. The Rabbi took him into the open air. It was noon-day; and he bade him look on the sun, blazing in its meridian splendour. "I cannot see," said Trajan; "the light dazzles me." Said the Rabbi, "Thou art unable to bear the light of one of these creatures; how, then, couldst thou look upon the Creator? Would not such a light annihilate thee?"

HINTS FOR WORKERS.

THE INQUIRY ROOM.

OUR first inquiry should be, "What brings you into the inquiry room? What do you think you need?" The answer may be, "I want to be saved," or, "I want to become a Christian," or, "I don't feel I am quite right," or, "I think I ought to turn." In one of these replies is there any very definite statement concerning sin, or any apparent consciousness of sin. Therefore, the first thing to be arrived at is to convict deeply of sin. The Gospel is not designed primarily to make people happy, and give them peace, but to deliver them from sin, its presence, power and penalty, and to bring them into communion with a Holy God. Sin is not an accident or misfortune, but a disease, active in principle, permeating every fibre and tissue of mind and body, hideous and loathsome as a foul leprosy, abominable and irremediable, not to be dealt with piecemeal, but to be attacked at its root. All the restlessness of soul, the craving for excitement, the love of the world, the dislike of holy things, the reluctance to come forward for Christ, are the effect of *sin* dwelling in the heart.

What, then, is the state of the heart of a sinner? See Jer. xvii, 9, 10; Matt. xv, 19. When did sin begin? At birth. Ps. li, 5. What are the propensities of sin? Rom. iii, 10-15. A true definition of a sinner is found in Is. i, 5, 6. The seat of sin is the heart, hence the injunction of Prov. iv, 23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." As in the physical nature so in the spiritual, a diseased heart impairs the functions of all the members of the body. What is needed? A change of heart, according to Ps. li, 10, and with a change of heart will come change of mind. Sound speech, sound judgment, and sound thoughts will surely follow.

Again, what is the Scripture definition of sin?

1 John iii, 4: "Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John v, 17: "All unrighteousness is sin." Rom. xiv, 23: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Prov. xxiv, 9: "The thought of foolishness is sin." James iv, 17: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Turn to Romans v, 6-10, and the following expressions will be found:—

Sinners. That is, by nature and habit. Enemies. Sin in activity against God. Without strength. Helplessness produced by sin. Ungodly. Sin manifesting itself in contrariety to God. Let inquirers learn as fully as possible what ails them, that they may be ready to accept the remedy to be offered to meet their need.

The following hints are suggested for dealing with the following kind of inquirers:—

The Listless Inquirer, whose eye wanders all round the room while you are talking to him, and who is more *curious* than anxious, needs to be taken to Heb. ii, 1-3, and iv, 1. Read these or similar Scriptures, say a few solemn words and bid him good-night. He is not yet ready to accept the Gospel. *The Proud Inquirer*, who is thankful he has not fallen so low as many others, should be pointed to such Scriptures as Prov. vi, 16, 17; xvi, 5; xxx, 13. So long as he thinks more highly of himself than does God, it is not wise to give him encouragement in the Gospel. *The Reticent Inquirer* is more difficult to deal with. Emphasize the need of confession of sin fully and frankly, according to John i, 9; Prov. xxviii, 13; to be followed by obedience to James v, 16. Then the confession of Christ according to Rom. x, 9. Explain that secret sin unconfessed withholds all hope of blessing (Ps. lxi, 18). The indulgence of secret sin also keeps out the Lord from having full possession, and if not now dealt with solemnly in His presence, it must be hereafter, to the soul's condemnation, according to Rom. ii, 16; Mark iv, 22.

G. SOLTAU.

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

FEEDING HIS LAMBS.

PASTORAL life is full of picturesque and poetic suggestions. By "pastoral life" we mean literal shepherd life: From the days of the earliest sacred and classic poets down to our own day, from the earliest hymns of David down to our most modern Gospel hymns, the shepherd idea has prevailed. Even the Divine Teacher took upon Himself the name of "The Good Shepherd" to endear Himself to the world for ever.

It is, however, to be remembered that the pictures that are painted and the poems that are written about lambs and sheep are one thing, and shepherds and the real shepherd life are another. This is rough and hard and wearisome. The sheep are not always tractable. A flock is frequently very difficult to manage. There is not so much time as is supposed for the shepherd to sit on a bank of violets, and wake the music of his flute. In some countries the heat is terrible, and in some the cold. The Oriental shepherd does not feel that life is all poetry when he is compelled to take his flock from place to place over burning sands to find water and pasture. The shepherd of Scotland plowing through snowstorms, facing terrific winds, cut in the face with snow and hail, must now and then think of what he has read of shepherd life in poetry, and its words must sound to him like a sarcasm.

It is so in spiritual pastoral life. What kind of things are Christ's sheep? They are such things as run away over the mountains, become tangled in the bushes, and lost in the ravine, and cost the Good Shepherd many a weary walk, oftentimes a pierced foot, and frequently an aching heart. And His lambs? They are not picturesque. Some of them are very dirty; some even very disgusting in their appearance; but *they are Christ's lambs*. For them the Good Shepherd laid down His life.

It is the conventional idea that a lamb is a very gentle and lovely thing: but some of Christ's lambs have very bad dispositions. There have been burglars and murderers and the filthiest of filthy souls among their ancestors. And these little lambs, the youngest of them sometimes, show the most disagreeable propensities and dispositions. The taint of the blood is in them. They are not all attractive in their ways, any more than those other lambs just described are attractive in their appearance. But for these little lambs, with the bad blood in them, and the ugly dispositions spoiling their lives—for these very lambs the Good Shepherd laid down His life.

Some of the Lord's lambs have also bad habits. They have been among some of the worst kinds of sheep, and have learned those things that are most ungentle and uninnocent. They have to be broken of many a trick before they quietly submit to the guidance of their Shepherd. They do not always walk gently at His side, glad to be led into green pastures and beside still waters. The Shepherd has to keep a constant eye upon them, lest they break out into something very disagreeable. Yet for these lambs of the bad habits the Good Shepherd laid down His life.

Sometimes the Lord's lambs are hidden away in very ugly places; the descent to them is very rough and dangerous. Sometimes they are in holes very difficult to reach, sometimes in noisome places. It

may tear one's dress, it may soil one's skin, it may deeply disgust one's senses, to find these sheep; and when found they may be difficult to feed; but down these most difficult, dangerous, and disgusting places the Lord Himself hath descended, and for these lambs, in these forlorn places, the Good Shepherd laid down His life.

Let none of us take up His work in the expectation that it is to be poetical, beautiful, and serene. Let us be glad when the little flock is quietly lying on the grass around us, having been well-fed, and allowing us time to tune our pipes in praises to the Lord; but when all the difficulties of the work seem to come into one moment of discouragement, let us press forward in it, hearing the voice of Jesus saying, "Feed My lambs." They are lambs, His lambs, and if there be nothing attractive in them, O how much there is in Him and His example to encourage us, who are His under-shepherds, to prosecute this good work and feed the lambs of our Lord, and lead them to the fold, which is up yonder, far beyond these black hills and these storm-swept valleys.—*Dr. Deems.*

REVIEW.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO A TEXT.

It may be asked, What is the best method of dealing with a text so as to be able to realise, in preaching from it, that the subject is being dealt with in a proper manner? To this enquiry many important answers could be given, but it may be helpful to those whose time is limited, or whose materials may be scanty, to try and remember the following points. They are by no means complete, but may be taken as sufficiently practical in the way of helping enquirers, to something like a satisfactory conviction that, in taking them into consideration, they are on the right road to succeed in their endeavours.

In dealing with a text it is needful, 1st, to ask, What is its construction? 2. What is its precise purpose to teach? 3. What is the doctrine it teaches or duty which it enforces? 4. What is positively expressed in the words employed? 5. What is its connexion with the passages which go before and after it? 6. What may then naturally and reasonably be inferred from it without straining its words?

These points being settled, it is then needful to try and ascertain—
1. What are its distinct parts? 2. To what sentiments or pious emotions does it naturally point? 3. To what characters or persons it will best apply? 4. At what sins it strikes more directly? 5. What virtues or godly fruits does it illustrate or enforce? 6. What difficulties does it tend to remove? 7. What helps does it suggest to those who are desirous of doing right? 8. What encouragements it holds out to the righteous? And, 9. What warnings to the wicked?

It is best to endeavour to try and take a full view of every subject rather than a partial one. To do this, it is at times needful to be on the look out to ascertain, whether there are not more views than one to be taken of the text, or the subject it suggests. Having ascertained this, then bring to bear all the material you can collect, and the illustrations you can find, so as to make it clear to those to whom you have to address yourself. Dr. Guthrie's threefold advice may with safety be also always kept before the mind while thus preparing. 1. Prove. 2. Paint. 3. Persuade. In other words, let the head be satisfied, the imagination aroused, and the heart warmed, to carry into effect what is known to be true and right, and seen to be best to be done. If this is realised, you will find that your efforts will not have been in vain.

HELP FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

LEPROSY: A PARABLE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

LEPROSY has always been regarded as a mysterious as well as a malignant disease. Unlike other diseases, it was to be detected and treated by the priests. Probably the disease was acquired by the Hebrews while badly fed and hardly worked in Egypt. The skin would become liable to cutaneous diseases on account of exposure to the dust of brickfields and heat of the burning sun. In the whole range of Scripture is no malady so fully described. Invested with such prominence and importance, the Hebrews would be (a) *put on their guard against ceremonial defilement*; (b) *filled with the spirit of religious fear*; (c) *stimulated to desire spiritual purity*. The patient, as he repaired to the priest convicted of pollution, must be humbled, and have thoughts suggested to his mind of unworthiness and sin.

I. LEPROSY WAS MYSTERIOUS IN ITS ORIGIN.—Neither the patient nor the priest could tell exactly how or when the disease originated; they had to attend to the symptoms, and concern themselves about the reality and *removal*. The priest could not look into the springs of life and analyse the seeds of the evil. So, moral evil, that affects our race, is mysterious in its origin; we can detect and trace its symptoms, prove its presence; it corrupts the springs of our moral nature, vitiates all the faculties of the soul. We know by *history*, observation, especially by *experience*, that we are the children of a sin-smitten race, the taint is in our blood, and only requires favourable circumstances to assert its malignity and power.

II. LEPROSY WAS INSIDIOUS IN ITS PROGRESS.—For a while the person affected might be unconscious of its presence; and even the priest might find difficulty in passing judgment after careful examination. It was liable to break out at any time, and under any circumstances it may reveal its presence and power—develope the most alarming symptoms. Little spots, so-called sins of inadvertency, slight infirmities, may secretly develope into morally corrupt habits, and disfigure the whole life.

III. LEPROSY WAS DETESTABLE IN ITS SYMPTOMS.—Every phase of it was associated with uncleanness. The patient not only became loathsome to himself, but offensive to society. Mental and moral anguish would accompany physical pain. The disease would disfigure and deform the frame, rendering life almost intolerable. So sin produces moral disfigurement, induces all kinds of sorrow. Holiness is beautiful, but wickedness is hideous. Our moral sense puts its stigma upon vice. Moral impurity God loathes, and will ultimately destroy. *Society has its lazar-houses, where depravity may not only be checked,*

but where its hideous symptoms may be hidden from beholders. Such sins as those spoken of in Rom. i, 21-32 justify the statement of Isaiah i, 5, 6, concerning the offensive features of moral corruption.

IV. LEPROSY WAS INVETERATE IN ITS TENACITY.—When once it asserted itself, the sufferer would have to be prompt and persevering in his efforts to get it eradicated. The priest had to make very close scrutiny to re-examine, and put the leper under repeated probation. Any contact with contagion would suffice to revive the old evil in all its virulence. There was the predisposition in the blood, *the secret of the trouble was there*. So with moral depravity; it has been transmitted in our blood, the springs of life are vitiated. Sin is indigenous, and defies complete eradication in this life. Only one sinless Being has lived on our earth. He was immaculately conceived; *we* are “born in sin,” and shapen in iniquity. Leprosy defied all human means to remove it; through the instrumentality of the divinely appointed priest alone it succumbed. *Education, reform, &c.*, cannot cure the depravity of the heart—nothing short of “the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness.” Through the mercy of God we can be “abundantly pardoned” here, and become “without spot” hereafter.—Rev. F. W. Brown, in the “Preachers’ Homiletical Commentary on Leviticus,” p. 176.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

“And He showed me a pure river of the water of life,” etc.—Rev. xxii, 1.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE RIVER. The love of God.

1. For its freeness.
2. For its abundance.
3. For its downward course.
4. For its perpetuity.

II. ITS PROPERTIES.

1. Always flowing.
2. Always pure and living.
3. Always increasing.

III. ITS SOURCE.

1. From the throne of God and the Lamb.
2. Teaching the unity and equality of Father and Son.

RELIGIOUS COURAGE.

“Quit you like men.”—1 Cor. xvi, 13.

There is something noble, elevating and manly in a Christian life. Hence the duty involved in acting like men. To do this it is needful—

1. To examine carefully the truth of the doctrines believed.
2. To be willing to own openly that the Bible is our rule of life.
3. To act courageously in defence of its principles.
4. To walk consistently with its teachings.
5. By constantly striving to attain the highest conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ in all things.

THE DIVINE UNCTION.

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One.”—1 John ii, 20.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE AND ITS MARKS.

1. An inward separation from sin.
2. The choice of holiness.
3. Devotedness to Christ.

II. THE BLESSED EFFECTS WHICH FLOW FROM THE

1. Knowledge of Christ as Saviour.
2. Knowledge of our misery.
3. Knowledge of the Divine influence of the Holy Spirit.

LESSONS—

1. The happiness.
2. Safety of Christians.
3. The needlessness of doubts and fears.

THE SAVIOUR'S YOKE.

“My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”—Matt. xx, 30.

The way to Heaven pleasant and happy—

1. Because of the *means of instruction* placed within our reach, showing us how to reach the end we desire.
2. Because of the *principles* it implants, and from which the Christian is required to act—*love*.
3. Because of the *helps* which the Christian derives from the Bible—the Holy Spirit, examples of good men.
4. Because of the *enjoyments* realised on the road. Peace of conscience—communion with God—satisfaction to the mind, &c.
5. Because of the *glorious* results to which it will lead. Heaven—perfect purity—eternal blessedness.

REVELATION OF PROPITIATION.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall bring your offering of the herd and of the flock.”—Lev. v, 2.

- I. THE AUTHOR of *Divine Revelation*—God,—“The Lord called unto Moses.” God *could* reveal. He *knew* what man needed; would

not remain silent and let man perish for want of *light* additional to that of nature.

II. THE MEDIUM of *Divine Revelation*—*Man*.—To a representative and brother of our race Divine communications came. Most *seasonable* and *appropriate* vehicle. Glorifying to God; dignifying to man.

III. THE SCENE of *Divine Revelation*—*Tabernacle*.—Sacred places fitted to be audience chambers with Deity. Revelations given in sacred spots, as well as to select persons.

IV. THE MEANS of *Divine Revelation*—*Speech*.—The Lord “spake” unto Moses, used human speech, though imperfect; other language would have been unintelligible and useless.

V. THE PURPOSE of *Divine Revelation*—*Redemption*.—To sanctify from guilt, to save from consequences of sin, to recover holiness in man here and for ever. Such redemption (1) *Mediatorial*—through priest; (2) *Sacrificial*—through oblations.—Rev. F. W. Brown, in “Preachers’ Homiletical Commentary on Leviticus.”

PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here.”—Matt. xii, 41.

These were the words of Christ, who spake as never man spake. He spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. In His teaching He emphasised the fact that “where much is given much is required.” Notice—

1. The two characters referred to in our text, viz., Jonah and Christ. Jonah was but a frail man, who preached one short sermon of wrath and ruin to the inhabitants of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Christ was perfect God, who preached many sermons of encouragement, calculated to lead the people of His day to trust in the enduring mercy of the Most High. Thus was Jesus greater than Jonah.

2. The text suggests that men are held morally responsible to God for their privileges. The Jews had greater opportunities of knowing and serving God than the heathen, hence more was expected from them. The Jews of Christ’s day had still higher advantages than those of old. We have better privileges than even the people to whom Christ ministered. We have free access to the Bible, open sanctuaries, good sermons, district visitors, &c., for a proper use of all of which God holds us responsible to Himself.

3. The degree of condemnation will be according to the non-use we make of the privileges at our disposal. As we have more light than

those who lived in the past we have greater responsibility ; and unless we honour our obligations duly we shall fare worse in the judgment, and eternity. Those who go to hell from a land of Gospel light like ours, will find their torment aggravated by the fact that others under less favourable circumstances have found their way to Heaven.

And it is well to reflect we are not only responsible for what we actually do know of God and His will, but for what we might know. The man who closes his eyes in the noonday to shut out the light, will have no excuse for any mistake he may make in consequence of his chosen darkness. If we would be saved at last we must make a diligent use of all the means of grace, and opportunities for enlightenment and improvement in spiritual concerns, at our disposal. If we do not the less favoured will rise up in judgment to condemn us, because they appreciated and walked in the smaller light God had given them. Let us resolve that we will seek more earnestly to know and do God's will.

J. WILKINSON.

A REFRESHING PRAYER-MEETING.

"WHY do you attend Dr. A—'s church?" The sufficient answer to this question was : " Well, he is an earnest, spiritual preacher, and his weekly prayer-meetings are a *feast* to my soul." This godly woman found nourishment, strength, and refreshment there ; and hungry people are apt to go where they are fed. There are soul-starving prayer-meetings, at which the usual fare is not much more attractive than was that of the poor lunatic whose keeper told him that he had been eating roast beef and pudding. " You may call it what you like," responded the poor fellow, " but it all tasted most abominably like *gruel*." No church can grow in grace or spiritual enlargements while its prayer-services are kept down to starvation point.

Good preaching contributes much towards the edification and life of a church ; but not one-half so much as good praying. It is idle to expect that any minister, however gifted with graces of tongue or heart, can build up into solid power and usefulness a congregation of prayer-neglecting people. He may attract a crowd of auditors on the Sabbath ; but if during the week his church members are crowding the social party, the concert-room, etc., and leaving their devotional meeting to become a forlorn and formal farce, that church has no growth. Its numbers may be swelled by certificates from other churches—not by conversions from the world. It is a mistake to

suppose that the root of a church is under its pulpit ; it is under the prayer-meeting. There is the place to water the root, to send the vital sap through every limb, and to make the branches heavy with the fruits of the Spirit.

A few years ago Mr. Moody (not then a celebrity) came to our new Mission-chapel to conduct a series of meetings for the conversion of souls. For several days he made no attempt at public preaching ; he confined himself exclusively to kindling a fire in the prayer-room. "This is slow work," I said to him. "Yes," he replied, "so it is, but it is *sure* work ; if I can get a few Christians well kindled with love and zeal for Christ, they will soon make an atmosphere here into which sinners will be drawn and will be melted." His prediction proved true. Whenever I see my prayer-meetings filled, not only with people, but with *full prayers* from fervent hearts, then I am certain as the prophet was that there will soon be "a sound of abundance of rain."

Several things contribute to the life, the interest, and the success of prayer-meetings. In the first place that meeting should be kept in the foreground. The pastor must "magnify" it before the people as Paul did his apostolic ministry. In the life of Richard Cobden I was impressed by the fact that he constantly *talked up* the injustice of the tax on bread wherever he went, until he aroused a sentiment which aided to sweep away the restrictive "corn laws." If a pastor desires his labours to be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, he must instruct his people in the vital necessity of their seeking the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. He must not cheapen the meeting by neglecting to attend it himself ; yet it is not commonly a wise thing for him to assume the management of it. That post of service had better be intrusted to some officer or leading member of the church. If he always occupies the leader's desk he is tempted into too much preaching or exhortation. His presence as overseer may embarrass some raw beginner or shy brethren who do not feel the courage to face the pastor in the chair. If he makes a long address, the others who follow him may get to be lengthy rather than strengthly. Let him rather take his seat as one of the family, and put in the right word at the right time. The chief end of a prayer-meeting is not to talk to each other, but fervent, devout converse with God ; a pound of prayer is often worth a ton of exhortation. Some meetings are exhorted to death. Scolding never edifies a saint or converts a sinner ; and a brother who habitually berates his fellow-members for their "coldness" or their shortcomings must needs look out for the window-panes in his own house.

Freedom is essential to all successful prayer-meetings. Better too

much of it than too little. If nobody is permitted to pray or to speak until he is called upon by the leader to do so, then the meeting becomes as much of a machine as the melodeon, that only emits a sound when the player presses a key. A prayer that is made "to order" is apt to be made to little purpose. If the service is thrown open and kept open for all who have a prayer in their hearts, then the divine Spirit may become the unobstructed leader of the service. How do I know when I call on a person to "*make* a prayer" that there is anything just then in his heart to make one out of. The poor brother may be set to pump out of a dry well.

Addresses in social meetings ought always to be brief. "Thou shalt not steal" other people's time or privileges any more than their money. Some prayer-meeting addresses run to stalk; there is a tall straw, but a few kernels of wheat. When a good thing has been said it is a good time to sit down. Even the best speakers are tempted to speak too often; they ought to leave room for new beginners and the diffident folks to "get the floor." I had rather hear ten sentences from a new convert or from some habitually silent brother than an hundred from some fluent Apollos who has become an adept in "much speaking." May a woman speak or pray in the social meeting? Yes, most assuredly, if the Holy Spirit move her thereto. Quench not the Spirit.

The prayer-meetings that feed the soul and bring down blessings are only maintained by those Christians who pray at home and in their closets, and who live near to God. If Christ be not the well-spring in the hearts of a flock their devotional meetings will soon dry up. Then God will leave such a church to drought and barrenness, until there are no more Elijahs to go up to Carmel and cry unto Him for rain. A revival sometimes begins in the depths of one single soul.

DR. CUYLER.

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

THE LOCUSTS.

"The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands."—Prov. xxx, 27.

AGUR would teach us that "Things are not what they seem." We judge too much by appearances, and are led astray by clever artifice. After viewing four small things which some count great, we are shown four fresh objects—objects of true greatness. What are they?

(1) The ants! for they prepare their meat in the summer. If you be as careful as the ant to lay up a store for days to come—to make the most of opportunities for forgiveness, work, and learning—though

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your stature be small, your brain power insignificant, your early advantages few—you shall be counted truly great. 1

(2) The conies—larger than the ants certainly, but the feeble conies.

(3) The locusts—of these I shall speak presently.

(4) The spider—an insect which we have been taught to dislike. Yet there is no better example of industry to be found. She taketh hold with her hands, from her own body spinning a web so fine, that man's ingenuity can produce nothing half so delicate. All hunt the spider, but through all her discouragements she spins, and is a true example of unfailing industry.

Boys! learn well the lessons taught by Agur; they are given for you. Girls! give heed to the teaching of the four things which are little upon earth, for they are "exceeding wise." Success does not depend upon personal beauty, natural talents, social status, or earthly advantages, nearly so much as upon a faithful discharge of every duty, a diligent usage of each opportunity, a devout obedience to the commands of God.

Respecting the condition of the locusts let us notice —

1. *There is something lacking.*

"The locusts have no king." Whilst the bees are governed by royalty, the locusts have no king. Whilst armies are led by captains, and governed by generals, "the locusts" have none. Though they take such long marches, and travel in such large companies, they have no one to lead them, and only instinct to direct.

Hatched by the heat of the sun, the poor little locust is left to shift for himself: no mother to provide for him, no older friends to supply his needs. He has to seek if he would find, to travel if he would eat.

I want you to notice that in the condition of *each* there is something lacking. The wealthiest are as truly wanting in some particular as the poorest. The more a man has, the more he will want; and were all the gold of the Indies laid at his feet, he would still cry, Give! Give!

When we see what our lives lack; when we think of comforts which we do not possess, let us remember that *each life lacks something*, and each is apt to consider his want greater than that of others, because he *only* knows its full inconvenience.

Again, "the locusts have no king," yet their duties are not left unperformed. Each insect is at his post. They keep time together in their marches, as though each company had a captain or a king. How is it with us? Someone must always watch us; our work requires inspection. If we *can* slip out of an unpleasant service, we do. Then the locusts cry shame, and point to their uninspected labours as an example to us. No boy or girl understands perfectly the precepts of the Gospel who takes an undue advantage of the absence of an overseer. It is the glory of the locusts that, without having a king, they are found

industrious and orderly ; it is the glory of any child, that *without oversight*, honest work is done, and the enemy sloth defeated.

2. *The locusts are enterprising.*

"Yet they go forth all of them." In order to appreciate their conduct in this respect, let us look well at them. Here is a locust. What is he like? *First, he is very small* ; then he is extremely harmless, and lacking in weapons of self-defence. No sting like the bee ; no poison-bag like the snake ; no row of glistening teeth like the tiger ; no claws like the cat ; no beak like the bird. He is at every man's mercy. Again, *he is not beautiful*, his colour being a dark brown, his form ungainly, his legs long and crooked, his wings short and not nicely marked. Altogether I don't like the locust, and fancy that most men upon seeing one would seek its destruction. "*Yet go they forth.*" How brave of them ! But oh, that is not half the story. Listen whilst I tell you that men *eat* the locust sometimes. That, to save their gardens and their crops, men burn, beat, drown, and otherwise destroy the locusts whenever they are seen. Now you can appreciate the courage displayed when the locusts "*go forth all of them.*"

Please remember that, although by no means handsome, the locust does not fear to show its face. It goes forth boldly. There are many who do well to note this. Perhaps you are a Christian at heart, and love the Gospel. Your own life is regulated by its principles, and you love to do God's will. But in society you never tell the good news, you hide your real convictions. Then look at the locust ! Remember, say you, I mix with ungodly boys, who would not like my Gospel, who would sneer at my Christianity, and wage war against my principles were I to make them public. Well, don't men wage war against the locust ? do they like the little rusty creature ? don't they more than sneer at him ! Be as fearless as he !

Perhaps a consciousness of weakness keeps you from confessing your faith. Remember, then, how weak we said the locust was ; how utterly lacking in weapons of self-defence. Yet he goes forth. What if you know that you cannot argue so well as your opponent—shall that keep you from letting him know your convictions ? A ready tongue does not always accompany a true heart, and he knows that. If you cannot *speak, live* your Gospel—"actions speak louder than words"—but oh ! do not hide your Christianity. Go forth, like the locusts, in spite of weakness, and your simple, honest, steadfast life shall be more powerful than the most eloquent tongue.

3. *The locusts are united.*

"Yet they go forth all of them *by bands.*" A locust is seldom seen alone. One or two of these creatures would soon be destroyed, but *in bands* they always conquer.

A traveller tells us that in the spring of 1845 he saw thousands of these insects skirting the sea-coast near which he was staying. They did no great harm at the time, and having laid their eggs, immediately disappeared. The people of the district anxiously awaited the time for the hatching of these eggs. As June approached, millions of young locusts might be seen. On the first of that month they formed into one mighty band, and swept up a hill to the village where our traveller was. Summoning all the people around, he went to meet the moving mass, hoping to destroy them or turn aside their march. The whole face of the mountain was black with locusts. The men dug trenches, kindled fires, and beat and burned to death heaps upon heaps; but the effort was utterly useless. Wave upon wave rolled up the mountain side, and poured over rocks, walls, ditches and hedges, those behind covering up and bridging over the masses already killed. As far as could be seen stretched an unbroken plain of locusts. The effort had to be given up as useless. What! man conquered by locusts? A band of men conquered by a band of locusts? Yes, even so. The locusts become strong when they are united. What power dwells in numbers! This should awaken and encourage the feeble saint. You dread the world with its allurements, the flesh with its temptations, the devil with his vile insinuations. You look from his strength to your weakness, and you weep tears of disappointment and fear. Then look again at the locust. He seeks for himself companions. They go in mighty bands. Without your telling me, I know that you are weak, but I know too in what strength lies. Come into the Church, feeble one. Become a part of the great whole Church of Believers, half of which is here and half in Heaven, and then tell me what you have to fear. That band is a greater one than the world can destroy. The flesh has no power to conquer it. Satan has grinned at it in hatred since its formation; yet it is beyond his grasp. In the Church there is strength; and yet many shiver and quake outside its doors, lamenting a weakness which just springs from the fact that they are outside. What would happen to a locust who would not join the band? Beware lest the same fate befall you.

Yet the fact remains, that although the body of locusts generally conquered, many individual insects perished in the fight. Do you, who have joined the mighty Church, feel that though the body as a whole is conquering, you individually are suffering defeat? Then let me tell of an arm which is not stretched out to help the locusts, but which is always ready to assist you. That arm never fails. It always strikes the death-blow. It is the arm of Jesus—lent to the individual members of the true Church: to the weakest, to the faintest, to the most trembling of all.

I see a war waging now. A mighty host of saints is drawn up against the world, the flesh, the devil, the angels of darkness, the powers of wickedness. Oh! what an awful array. But the Church is winning! Yes, yes; it's winning—winning gloriously. Are there, then, no professing saints overthrown? Yes, there are some. Who are they? Methinks, boys and girls, they are such as stand *outside the band*, or they are such as, being in the band, reject the assistance of the arm of Jesus. Fighting alone, or fighting in their own strength, they fall.

"The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands."

REV. S. KING.

TRAINING THE YOUNG.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it."—Proverbs xxii, 6.

I.—THE DUTY ENFORCED. "TRAIN UP," &c.

1. By proper discipline.
2. By careful instruction.
3. By consistent example.
4. By fervent prayer.

II.—THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO FULFIL THE DUTY.

1. The Divine promise.
2. The value of early habit.
3. The power of habits once formed.
4. Instances of success.
5. The joy of meeting in heaven. Here am I and the children, etc.

THE CHRISTIAN CADET.

"Fight the good fight."—1 Tim. vi, 22.

Our chief Captain, Jesus Christ, wishes His children to be taught to fight. They need to be taught how to be good soldiers of the cross. There are five orders.

I.—CONQUER YOURSELVES. BAD TEMPER, ETC.

II.—FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT.

III.—FIGHT AGAINST THE WRONG.

IV.—BE TRUE TO YOUR CAPTAIN.

V.—EXPECT TO CONQUER.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

"Take the sword of the spirit," &c.—Eph. vi, 27.

The Bible is the sword. Sunday Schools are used to teach sword practice.

I.—HOW MUCH HAS THE SWORD COST. II.—IT HAS A WONDERFUL NAME ON IT—GOD. III.—IT HAS BEEN VERY USEFUL.

There are three things you should do with it.

1. Take it.
2. Keep it bright
3. Use it skilfully and all the time you live.

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

THE BOLDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS. (Prov. xxviii, 1.)—A distinguished general said to Luther, as the latter was about to enter the presence of his judges at the Diet of Worms: "Poor Monk! Thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captain has ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee."

OF John Knox, the Scottish Luther, it was said by one who stood by his grave, "Here lies one who never feared the face of man!"

SEVERAL Indian chiefs having become open enemies of the Gospel, Mr. Elliott, sometimes called the Apostle of the American Indians, when in the wilderness without the company of any Englishman, was at various times treated in a threatening and barbarous manner by some of the Indians. Yet his Almighty Protector inspired him with such resolution that he said, "I am about the work of the great God, and my God is with me, so that I fear neither you nor all the sachems (or chiefs) in the country. I will go on, and do you touch me if you dare." They heard him and shrank away.

THE soul is the life of the body. Faith is the life of the soul. Christ is the life of faith.—*Flavel*.

GOD hath promised pardon to him that repenteth, but He hath not promised repentance to him that sinneth.—*St. Augustine*.

I WONDER many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what the Lord is preparing for him.—*Rutherford*.

REAL faith is as satisfied, and rests as firmly on the abiding promise of Jehovah, as if it had all the blessings of grace and glory in hand.—*Toplady*.

RELIGION is never fashionable. The way of peace is not the broad way superintended by Paris, but the narrow way watched by the Redeemer.—*Moody*.

NOTHING else is to be called the business of life at all. I am extreme, you may think; but this is liberty and life to me to know Christ.—*George Macdonald*.

MY grand point in preaching is, to break a hard heart and to heal a broken heart.—*John Newton*.

THE coloured sunsets and the starry heavens, the beautiful mountains and the shining seas, the fragrant woods and the painted flowers, they are not half so beautiful as a soul that is serving Jesus out of love, in the wear and tear of common, unpoetic life.—*Frederick W. Faber.*

As in the sun's eclipse we can behold the great stars shining in the heavens, so in this life-eclipse have these men beheld the lights of the great eternity burning solemnly and for ever.—*Longfellow.*

IT is well known that grass grows greenest where battles have been fought, and I always think there are some herbs of comfort and assurance that do not grow till the heart itself has its graves.—*Edward Garret.*

“All is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will.”

HEAVEN will be the sweet surprise of a perfect explanation.—*Dr. R. Price.*

OLD truths are always new to us, if they come with the smell of heaven upon them.—*Bunyan.*

TROUBLE and perplexity drives me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.—*Melancthon.*

Let me find in Thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy ;
Out of self to love be led,
And to heaven acclimated.

—*F. G. Whittier.*

MOURNING after an absent God is an evidence of love as strong as in rejoicing in a present one.—*F. W. Robertson.*

SINCE I began to ask God's blessing on my studies, I have done more in one week than I have done in a whole year before.—*Payson.*

“OUTER DARKNESS !”—Tell us in detail what the condition of the outcasts will be, and what will be the constituents of their suffering, We cannot. Rome has impiously traded on this weakness of humanity. She has parcelled out her purgatory, as we delineate this upper world, on a map. This is the machinery whereby she is enabled to traffic in the souls of men. No, that condition lies in outer darkness ; I cannot see through the veil, and tell the specific sufferings that lie beneath it. My Lord has told me that it is in outer darkness, but He has covered it from my sight. He has done all things well. He often warns us that the wicked shall be cast away ; but He never tells us the particulars of their torments. For teaching about this terror let me listen to His Word ; from safety from it, let me hide in His bosom.—*W. Arnot.*

O FOR the angel from heaven to trouble the pool of our stagnant

church life and make it a Bethesda ! Then would the lame, halt, and withered crowd its porches waiting for the moving of the water. O for the habit of expecting the power of God to be seen in every service of worship ! How would the prayer of faith cast out the giant Anakim of unbelief, that slumbers in our pews and sometimes mounts even our pulpits ?—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

“THE Preacher’s Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, containing Suggestive Readings, Homiletics, Illustrations,” &c., by Rev. W. H. Jellie and Rev. F. W. Brown. (Dickinson.) This is another volume of the Preacher’s Homiletical Commentary, and certainly is in no way inferior to any of its predecessors. It is a masterpiece of valuable and reliable material for those who wish to expound with profit and interest the rich significance of the lessons which are stored up in this wonderful book of Leviticus. In these days of doubtful theology it is refreshing to find so much sound teaching to be unfolded from a part of the Bible which many preachers shun, because they imagine it contains so few themes upon which they can discourse. A study of this volume will show them their mistake, and reveal what a large storehouse there is for them in these regulations to the Israelites. We have taken the liberty of selecting two samples out of the 349 Homilies, and 247 of which are original as illustrations of the manner in which the editors have done their work. We trust it may lead our readers to procure a copy of the book without delay, so that they may be able to judge for themselves what a splendid stock of material there is for them to work upon, in bringing out the beauty and lessons of a too-much-neglected portion of the Word of God.

“The Reality of Faith,” by Newman Smith. (Dickinson.) There is a freshness and vigour about these sermons which will be sure to make them acceptable to thoughtful readers. Faith a preparation for sight—God’s self-revelations through Life—The Difficulty of not Believing—Jesus’ view of Life—Making for ourselves Souls—The Imperatives of Jesus—Life a Prophecy—The Last Judgment—Christian Judgment. Such are some of the titles, which clearly indicate that they treat upon subjects of the most interesting and vital character, and it is only right to add, that they are looked at by a mind quite alive to the special difficulties of the times in which we live, and ready to face them in a calm and earnest spirit.

“The People’s Bible : Discourses on Holy Scripture,” by Joseph Parker, D.D. “The Book of Genesis.” This is the beginning of the

life-work of Dr. Parker, and it is our earnest wish that he may live to complete it. To those familiar with his style it is hardly needful to say it is altogether unlike any other work on the Bible. It is not a Bible Commentary in the usual sense of the term; but it is a concentration of the main features of each book into a focus, so as to bring its special teaching clearly to the mind. In this way it will be helpful to all who desire to realise, what each writer has to say, and to understand the purpose he has in view. This, to our mind, is one of the most important things which needs doing. We hope from time to time to be able to select extracts from the volume which will be helpful to those whose mission it is to teach the people out of the Book. Meantime we cordially commend it to our readers as by far the most original and suggestive volume on the Book of Genesis, which has passed under our notice. It is also splendidly printed and bound, and, although consisting of nearly 400 pages, published at 8s., a price which brings it within the reach of numbers who need such books to help them in their work.

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Books for Review may be sent to the Editor, or may be left at the Office of the Publisher, 39, Warwick Lane, London, E.C.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

CELESTIAL VISITORS.

“And behold there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias.”

MANY centuries had elapsed since Moses and Elias had been called away from the earth to the world “unseen and eternal.” So silent and separate from this has that world been throughout the ages, that when a man dies we do not expect to see his face or to hear his voice again in the flesh. Sometimes in dreams we go to our departed friends, or they come to us; we meet face to face; old associations are awakened; we re-live days and months of former years. But when the morning opens the spell is broken; they fade from our view; we make the disappointing discovery that it was a dream, and that they are yonder and we here, separate from each other as before the mysterious meeting. When we read of the reappearance of Moses and Elias after their long absence, our first feeling is that of wonder; it is to us a miracle, a strange thing, for the dead do not return. But why view it thus? We believe that there is a spirit-world: and we are taught in the New Testament that the departed are not forgetful of the existence they had on this earth. The inhabitants of heaven in some way become acquainted with what takes place here. They are still the same persons; their love to us is not only unextinguished, but developed and made perfect by their nearer communion with God; their hearts are human as they were of old, and more human because more Divine. Considering these things, the wonder is, not that Moses and Elias were seen in “the holy mount,” but that the separation between us and the “blessed dead” should be so complete. Their long unbroken silence is the strange thing when you think of it.

We long to know more of them and the world in which they dwell. When we think of them, remembering what they were to us, we look up into the quiet heavens, and are tempted to say, “Reveal yourselves; come near, that we may feel your presence; speak, ye silent ones, that we may hear again the voices we loved so well.” But it is vain; there is no reply; heaven keeps its own secrets. Nature moves on as usual, seasons come and go, and years pass away, but no answer is given to the questionings of our hearts. It is not for us to murmur at this, for God is great, and wise, and good. He is the right judge of what we should and should not know. He knows what is good, what is *best* for us, and acts accordingly.

It may be impossible to reveal the unseen world to us; that state

may be so unlike our present state, that no words or symbols can give us a right and full conception of it. You cannot explain to a child the wonders of science, philosophy, poetry, and art ; and we may bear the same relation to the mysteries of the heavenly existence as He bears to the advanced knowledge of men. Enough is revealed for all the purposes of "life and godliness." All that is necessary to stimulate our hearts to reach the world of light is declared, or implied, or suggested in the New Testament ; and we should use the truth received rather than complain that all is not made manifest.

We know for one thing that human spirits are not annihilated when they disappear from this world.

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him there in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days." This looks like the end of all to Moses—he finished his work, died, and was buried ; and ignorance might have said, He has ceased to be, body and spirit sleep together in the valley in the land of Moab. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." The first thing we hear of Elijah is this : "And Elijah the Tishbite said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to My word." He came upon the king like a thunderbolt ; "he arose as fire, and his word burned as a torch ;" his life was powerful as a winter storm, and he passed away at last in a whirlwind. Unbelief might have said, "The bold Elijah, with his burning eloquence, is dead ; the elements raged at the time of his decease ; the ignorant people believe that the thunder-cloud was a chariot, and the lightning horses, and that their prophet was taken up to heaven. This is only their superstitious fancy, for Elijah, like all his fathers, has sunk into eternal silence and death." But after many long ages of silence the two great men reappear upon the earth, and give visible proof in their own persons that death is not the destruction of the human spirit. "There talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias."

This is immense knowledge gained from these celestial visitors, and it harmonises with the deepest feelings of our hearts. We love life, and desire its continuance even amid the cares, disappointments, and sufferings of the present state. The mind recoils, falls back affrighted from the prospect of "everlasting destruction." Life—the powers of consciousness, thought, will, and imagination ; the sights and sounds of nature ; and the enjoyments of friendship, love, and hope. Life—

with its memories of the past, its present delights, and its glowing anticipations of a brighter future—is unspeakably dear to our hearts. And to lose it all, and for ever!—to fall like withered leaves from “the tree of existence,” never to be revived—to vanish as heavy substance through deep wave—to be blown away like chaff from the threshing-floor, and consumed into utter nothingness. Who can consider this, and say, I hope it is true? Who can contemplate this picture, and exclaim, It is beautiful to behold? Should anyone reply, “I can,” then the only observation to be made to him is this: By some mysterious process known to you alone you have managed to transform yourself, you have reversed the order of nature, destroyed the strongest instincts of the soul, and extinguished the deepest desires of your own heart; for you love what others hate, and take delight in that which human nature fears. The promise of Christ, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish,” is God’s answer to the longing cry of man’s spirit.

In this doctrine of immortality through Christ, we take refuge from the transitoriness of all earthly things. “The fashion of this world passeth away.” To know how rapid are the transformations, return to the home of your youth after an absence of thirty or forty years. The very aspect of the neighbourhood is *new*. The ancient dwelling-places have been swept away; the trees under which you played have been uprooted, and the fields wherein they stood are converted into uncomely noisy streets; the inscriptions in the churchyard, with which you were so familiar, are almost unreadable; and the wild grandeur of the landscape has been replaced by artificial plantations, to please some man who has acquired wealth, and has therefore the right to spoil the natural beauty of the world according to his own desire. The fathers of the valley, the old people whom you knew, are in their graves; the companions of your boyhood are grey with age; and a new generation whom you never saw before have grown up there. You are a stranger in your own country—a foreigner in the house of your fathers. The world around us is a series of changing, melting, dissolving views. And this is not all, for “the fashion” of ourselves also “passeth away.” With joy, and delightful anticipations of what is to be, we climb the hill of life, and after casting many a longing look at the distant height, we reach the desired summit. The air is pure, the prospect is grand, and the sun shines brightly; and we feel that “it is good for us to be here,” and would “make tabernacles” for ourselves and others. But no, this is not to be. A voice which we must obey speaks, “This is not your resting-place.” We are hurried down the steep rugged path on the other side; cold, damp, dense mists meet us in our descent; and at last we disappear in the gloom of the deep valley. Truly we are

"strangers and pilgrims on the earth." But this disappearing is not the destruction of our being. The loved ones that are gone before, to whom our hearts cleave with an affection that can never be extinguished, are not lost. Deep was our sorrow when they were called away. The "horror of great darkness" fell upon our spirit; it encompassed us round about, pressed upon us; its chilling influence entered into all the faculties of the soul; and we stood broken, crushed, and helpless before the mysterious and terrible vision of death. But, thank God, we know that they live still, and that we shall live with them. This knowledge we receive from "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

Human spirits have a personal existence after death.

All souls are parts of the Divine mind. United to a material body, they are darkened, defiled, and degraded; like rays of pure light entering the cloudy atmosphere of the earth, the brightness of their original glory is obscured. At death they return to God, are absorbed into the Divine nature, become one with Him, and have no longer a personal existence—thus have men speculated concerning nature and the future destiny of the soul. When the waters of the river have poured themselves into the sea, they exist, not as a separate stream, but as parts of the vast ocean. The body dies, and in a few years it has mingled with the dust of the earth; the substance of which it was composed has not been annihilated, but its wonderful form has been destroyed—it exists now as a part of the great body of the earth. Thus, some have thought, shall it come to pass with the spirits of men—they shall be for ever, but not as individuals; these finite, separate streams shall flow into, and become one with, the original, infinite, and eternal Source of existence.

But these "imaginations" are cast down by the New Testament. "There talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias." They had not been annihilated, neither had they been absorbed into any other nature than their own; they were "two men" still, and the same two men, "Moses and Elias." They had a distinct, personal, human existence. The only difference mentioned is this, "They appeared in glory." They resembled their Lord who stood by them, and of whom it is said, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." When they lived here of old they appeared in mortal bodies, trials, temptations, sorrows, and moral imperfections. But now they had no cumbrous material frames to be troubled with—they could descend from heaven to earth, and ascend from earth to heaven as naturally as sunbeams glide through space. They were free from the oppressive laws of matter which tyrannise over us, and chain us to this small world in the immense creation of the Almighty. "They appeared in glory"—the light of profound know-

ledge, perfect holiness, pure love, reverent feeling, and infinite repose shone in their countenances. They were Moses and Elias still, but wondrously changed—sinful, sorrowful, mortal men, transformed into holy, blissful, and immortal beings.

Moses and Elias are representatives of “the spirits of just men made perfect.” We see in them what all faithful souls shall be when the great redemption is completed. Our present state is characterised by ignorance, moral imperfection, and sorrow. Ignorance of the highest subjects is a condition of existence here. God hideth Himself, so that with all our searching we cannot “find out the Almighty.” The spiritual world which we feel to be so near is not made manifest. Our own life is full of mystery. In our efforts to acquire knowledge, we resemble a man walking in darkness; we proceed slowly, cautiously, and are obliged to feel our way, that we may avoid the pitfalls of error that beset our path on either side. Our visions of truth are imperfect as a sleeper’s dreams—vague, unconnected, and fragmentary. “We see through a glass darkly.” The moral atmosphere of this world is impure. Of all the countless millions that have passed through it, only one kept Himself separate from sin and sinners, and He was the Son of God. We need not enter into the speculations concerning “original sin.” I am not sure that I know what is meant by that expression. We cannot believe that human souls, as they come from the hands of the Creator, are sinful. If children are born with a wicked nature; if they are filled with predispositions to sin, and have, as it were, organs of sin in their spiritual constitution, then they *must* become sinners. But in that case sin would be their misfortune and not their crime. We should have regard to human nature as it displays itself in the lives and characters of men, rather than distract ourselves with the metaphysics of this most difficult subject. “God created man in His own image;” but the Divine likeness has been stained and torn by evil thoughts and sinful deeds; the beautiful statue which He formed has been maimed and broken: the tree which He planted has been blasted and shattered by the storm. Wildest confusion has somehow been produced in our nature; the great King has been banished from His throne, and lawless anarchy has followed His departure. Life and death work in the physical part of our being; there is a law in the members warring against the law of the mind; and the mind is even at war with itself, the reason and the will oppose each other. These things being so, sorrow is natural to us; tears are indigenous here. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.”

But the purpose of the Saviour is to change all this, and to bring us into the state revealed in the Gospel. The redeemed spirit shall be made as like unto God as it is possible for it to be. It shall appear

before Him "in glory." Every faculty, thought, and emotion shall reflect His holiness, truth, and love. The leafless tree, trembling in the cold blast of the winter winds, is the image of what we now are; the same tree covered with foliage, blossoms, and fruit, is the symbol of what the sanctified soul shall be. The dark sorrowful cloud hanging heavily in the atmosphere represents our present state; that cloud penetrated by the rays of the morning light, fringed with gold, made luminous and beautiful by the splendour of the rising sun, is the expression of the glory that shall be revealed in the spirits of redeemed men. The mind shall be illumined with the pure light of knowledge unmingled with error; the heart shall be filled with all the emotions which constitute perfect bliss; the imagination shall soar to the highest regions and present nothing to the soul but visions of truth and beauty. The whole nature shall be in harmony with itself, with God, with the holy intelligences of the spirit-world, and with all the circumstances in which it shall for ever exist.

REV. THOMAS JONES.

Swansea.

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THE SINNER REMOVED IN ANGER.

"Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away."—Job xiv, 20.

I. THE AFFECTING TRUTH.—"Thou changest his countenance."

1. By conscience.
2. By sickness.
3. By age.

EXAMPLES.—Cain, Ahab, Belshazzar.

II. THE AWFUL EVENT. "Thou sendest him away."

God does this :

1. Implies guilt.
2. Implies shame. Ezra ix, 6.
3. Implies anger.

III. THE MANNER.

1. From what is he sent? From possessions, connections, &c.
2. How is he sent?
3. Whither is he sent? To Eternity, the Bar of God.

THE BELIEVER'S FRIEND.

"This God is our God, for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death."—Psalm xlviii, 14.

I. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PSALMIST SPEAKS OF GOD.

1. As great—verse 1.
2. As a refuge—verse 3.

3. As a God of lovingkindness—verse 9.
4. As full of righteousness—verse 10.
5. As a God of judgments—verse 11.
- II. THE CLAIM MADE. "This God is *our* God."

1. It is a personal claim.
2. It is an extensive claim.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS TO BE DRAWN FROM SUCH A CLAIM.

1. He will be "our guide."
2. He will "guide unto death."
3. Over and beyond death.

THE HAPPY SITUATION.

"And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word."—Luke x, 39.

The situation of many denotes—

1. Humility.
2. Attention.
3. Admiration.
4. Honour.
5. Felicity.
6. Security.
7. Happiness.

PRAISE TO THE LAMB.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," etc.—Rev. v, 12.

Three descriptions of characters who differ in their views of Christ:—

1. Some who think nothing of Him at all.
2. Those who think something.
3. Those who think everything of Him and sing, Worthy is the Lamb, etc.

I. CHRIST IS WORTHY OF THE STUDY OF ALL for the following reasons:—

1. The greatness of His person.
2. The wonders of His life.
3. The circumstances of His death.
- II. CHRIST IS WORTHY OF OUR FAITH.
1. Because He endured our punishments.
2. Because He procured our acceptance with God.
3. Because He maintains our interests in Heaven.

III. CHRIST IS WORTHY OUR PREACHING.

1. The doctrines He taught.
2. The precepts He delivered.
3. The promises He bestows.
4. The grace He imparts.

DESCRIPTION OF A GOOD MAN.

"The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity."—Malachi ii, 6.

Written of Levi, son of Jacob, and produced in contrast to the character of the Levites in the time of Malachi. To show what they ought to be, so as to be acceptable to God. It includes—

1. SINCERITY. Seen from the whole scope and spirit of the passage.
2. VERACITY. He spoke the "truth."
3. THOUGHT, care, and intelligence. He must understand the "truth" before it could leave his lips.
4. COMMUNICATIVENESS. Did not hoard up his knowledge as a miser his gold. "The law of truth was on his lips."
5. PRUDENCE. No iniquity was found among his numerous utterances.
6. GODLINESS. He "walked" with the Lord.
7. HE WAS A PEACEMAKER. Possessed it himself and diffused it among others.
8. JUSTICE. He lived in the practice and propagation of "equity."
9. BENEVOLENCE of the highest order.
10. SUCCESSFUL EFFORT. He laboured to turn them from "iniquity," and was successful.

Lessons: (1) A pleasant picture. (2) Should beget a desire to be like him. (3) And to walk in his steps.

HINDRANCES TO BE OVERCOME.

"Hinder me not."—Genesis xxiv, 56.

I. SOME OF THE HINDRANCES TO A CHRISTIAN LIFE—

1. From the opposition of our wicked heart.
2. From the persuasions of wicked friends.
3. From the hopes of ambition and love of earthly distinctions.
4. From the cavils of unbelief.
5. From the ridicule of the vicious.
6. From the pleasures of the world.

II. HOW TO TREAT THESE HINDRANCES—

1. Say unhesitatingly, "Hinder me not."
2. Say God commands my immediate repentance.
3. Say God commands my immediate submission to Christ.

III. THE REASONS THAT SHOULD PROMPT SUCH A DECISION—

1. From the numerous blessings God has conferred upon you.
2. From the uncertainty of life.
3. Because of the work you have to do.

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4. Because of the immortal issues bound up with your decision.
Say—

Through duty, and through trials too,
I'll go at His command;
Hinder me not, for I am bound
To my Immanuel's land.

THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT OF SALVATION.

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."—1 Thess. v, 9, 10.

In these words we have the truth—

- I. *That salvation is of Divine appointment.* See 1 Thess. i, 10;
Rom. ix, 11, 23, &c.

As such an appointment it is—

1. Wisely arranged.
2. Timely.
3. Sufficient for all the purposes required.

- II. *That in this Divine appointment of salvation we have a beautiful exhibition of God's mercy.*

1. In the non-appointment to wrath, which we deserve.
2. In the death of Jesus Christ for us.

- III. *That Jesus Christ is the special medium through which this appointment is carried into effect.* "But to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here we see—

1. The exclusive Saviourship of Jesus Christ.
2. The inutility of all other attempts to work out this appointment.

- IV. *That this Divine appointment comprehends the restoration and vital union of souls with Christ.*

"That whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him."
Oldham. THOS. COLCLOUGH.

SEVEN DEGREES OF FAITH.

1. No faith. Mark iv, 40.
2. Little faith. Matt. xvi, 8.
3. Great faith. Matt. xv, 28.
4. So great faith. Matt. viii, 10.
5. Full of faith. Acts vi, 5.
6. Weak in faith. Rom. iv, 19.
7. Strong in faith. Rom. iv, 20.

There are not many *kinds* of faith; if our faith is in the *right object* (Christ), it is the *right kind*; there may be *many* degrees.

SEVEN THINGS IN REFERENCE TO THE UNSAVED.

They have—

No Christ. Rom. viii, 9.

No excuse. Rom. i, 20.

No escape. Heb. ii, 3.

No God. Eph. ii, 12.

No hope. Eph. ii, 12.

No life. 1 John v, 12.

No peace. Rom. iii, 17.

J. SPRUNT.

 THE PLATFORM.

 HINTS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKERS.

Would you agree with me if I say that to do good, a speaker must be liked, or, at all events, he must be worthy of being liked? Certainly, the converse will hold good, that there should be nothing in himself, his spirit, his words, his tones, his dress, his manner, which is calculated to offend.

Action has its place. Probably most speakers of energetic minds would feel fettered, and become impassive, unless, however unintentionally, some part of the body moved with the mind. But working with the shoulders, beating books or desks, putting the hands behind the coat, doubling fists, and so on, should be shunned. Speakers little think how objectionable these habits are to persons of mental power and proper feeling; while such hearers as gape with admiration are really unprofited. The white handkerchief just drawn out of the breast pocket, the diamond pin, the metal chain shaking before the hearer's eyes—all these things should not be seen on the speaker, though of course he should dress thoroughly well, appropriately to his condition in life.

Never use the precious power of public speech on an unworthy topic. Speak the truth, and uphold the cause of truth and goodness, the cause of God. It will be a bitter reflection hereafter if we have spoken on the wrong side.

It seems inherent in some persons, even really godly men, to be not only pleasant, but to possess a humorous turn of mind. They have a keen sense of the ludicrous themselves, and enjoy communicating it to others. Audiences are kept constantly laughing by their anecdotes or allusions, even at meetings called in the cause of God. Of course this must be a great hindrance to the Holy Spirit's operations, and such a mind may need severe self-discipline to overcome its easily aroused inclinations. Suffer, therefore, a word of exhortation, that while culti-

vating a genial cheerfulness, a warmth and glow, and admitting a greater freedom on miscellaneous topics, you beware of saying or relating anything which may create levity.

Do not be long. Ten minutes to a quarter of an hour is long enough at a public meeting when there are several speakers, unless a special part is allotted to you ; twenty minutes at the outside for an open-air address, and with special exceptions, forty minutes for a lecture or expository address—the latter often shorter. Never weary an audience. If you have really something to say worth hearing, they will probably, sitting or standing, be fixed motionless as statues by the truth spoken in telling words. But if you observe that they become restless, either take up a fresh point or close as soon as you can ; and make the event an occasion for seeking amendment in yourself.

Suffer a remark which will become to you of greater importance than may at first be thought. If you are about to speak on a spiritual subject, be extra careful to be moderate in your diet. If the body has much solid food to digest, or the brain is affected by the fumes of liquid food, spiritual service will be hindered.

In conclusion, I would say, on a general subject give free scope to any oratorical powers you possess, after sowing the word of knowledge. But if the subject is Scriptural, hold oratory in great control. Indeed, throughout, let the human element be kept under ; and finally, let the Divine only remain before the soul of the hearer.

J. VAN SOMMER.

—“*The Bond of Union.*”

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS : THE CONIES.

“The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.”—
Prov. xxx, 26.

THESE words are those of Agur, son of Jakeh. Some think Agur rather a description of his character, than to be the author's name. The word signifies a collector or gatherer ; one given to gathering together the wise sayings of others, rather than composing them himself. In verse 3 he says, “I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy ;” by which he may mean that instead of himself uttering wise sayings, he had been scribe to some wise and learned man. Methinks there are many of us who could do thus much. Of originality we have little, of true wisdom less ; but possibly we can collect something from the wisdom and originality of others, which may be the means of strengthening the faith and increasing the knowledge of some with less time, and fewer opportunities for research, than we possess. Feeble

art thou, O Agur, according to the estimate thou formest of thyself; yet, mighty art thou in that such talents as thou hast are used to the best advantage. That which thou didst compile has been handed through all generations, and men may now see how grand a thing it is for each to do his best. Thou art like the conies, foolish, yet wise, and thy God and ours "Hath used the weak things of this world to confound the wise and mighty, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things which are." How often do we see this fact demonstrated? The feeble are counted foolish by such as are strong; yet, I fancy I know a man of simple godly character, a man with little learning, and still less of worldly cunning; a man called weak by his fellows, who, in things of higher name, in righteousness before God, was strong and great. Such an one has builded his house upon a rock; and—when the houses of such as call themselves great are abolished; when the rain descends and the floods come; when the wind blows, and the houses of these are fallen; when the strong are buried 'neath the ruins of the houses they counted secure, and the breath of the last man has been beaten out by the falling timber;—when the testing time has come, and the sandy foundations have been washed away by the mighty waves belonging to the ocean of God's wrath, and the proud owners of the fallen mansions have sunk to rise no more;—just then the simple shall flourish, the feeble shall live, the weak shall rejoice; *his* house shall fall not, for it is founded upon a *rock*.

Near the holes of the conies there is generally an old male animal set as sentry. If danger approach, he utters a whistle to apprise his companions; and thus by extra vigilance they escape the injury to which their extreme weakness would expose them. Is not a similar thing frequently noticed in human nature? do not the delicate frequently outlive the robust? The less gifted take the highest places, the slowest win the race? Many a dull boy has, by persistent plodding, accomplished that in which his smarter companion has failed. Many a consumptive sister has outlived her strong, but careless, brother; many a man whose body lacked some important limb or sense; many an one whose frame was constantly convulsed with pain, has, by extra care, zeal, and industry, left a name behind him, which will be remembered and blessed when the names of healthier and better qualified men live only in the memory of God.

It is not long since I read an article which remarked upon the amount of good work accomplished by men who had some grievous "thorn in the flesh." The immortal Milton, and our late Postmaster-General suffered with blindness; Mr. Spurgeon, so untiring in work, so powerful in speech, is unwell; Grace Darling, so ill-fitted by reason of *her sex*, was able to accomplish the noble task of rescuing the ship-

wrecked sailors ; and more astounding than all, one of France's greatest artists was altogether without arms. The son of a village cobbler, he was sent to the country school, and, to the surprise of the master, soon became the most proficient writer of all, though reduced to the necessity of holding the pen between his toes. In time he began to paint, and passing altogether his companions in art, he ultimately took the highest place in his country and age as an artist. Surely the army of the feeble is mighty, and blind indeed is he who thinks the feeble are always foolish. Let this encourage such as feel the weakness which places them at a disadvantage with their fellows. The conies are a feeble folk, but by action prompt and well chosen, the feebleness is overcome, and they are held up to men as an example of the truly wise. So may it be with you ! "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks."

SAMUEL KING.

BE WATCHFUL.

My dear young friends, you must watch while you are in this world. There are so many dangers around us that we need to be always watching like the sentry—like the man looking out for land on board ship—like the policeman watching when he has suspicion on some evil-disposed person or persons. The Christian, too, must be always watching. Why must we watch ?

I. BECAUSE WE HAVE AN EVIL HEART.—And so long as we are strangers to God we shall be very easily prompted to do that which is evil. We should ask the Lord Jesus to take our heart and keep us from sin—doing that which is sinful ; there are many things which we need to watch.

II. INTEMPERANCE.—You know what a dreadful thing the drink is—how many homes are blasted and made miserable through drunkenness. Many poor children suffer very badly through having drunken parents.

III. BAD COMPANY.—You must be careful that you keep from bad companions ; many have been sadly led astray through the evil influence of bad company.

IV. DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS.—This is a very important duty you have to observe, and watch against all thoughtlessness and irreverence towards your parents. You will, I dare say, remember the Scriptures tell us to remember that we honour our father and mother.

V. SABBATH BREAKING, and scoffing at God's holy word. These and kindred other sins we have to watch, and lastly when you have

VI. RECEIVED PARDON AND PEACE, do not forsake the truth on any consideration ; consequently you will need the help of the Saviour to

protect you and guide you. I hope you will be ever watching ; may your lives be spent in the service of the Saviour, and then you will obtain an imperishable crown eternal in the heavens.

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

RUNNING AGROUND.

“ And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground.”—
Acts xxvii, 41.

If the ship runs aground there are only one of two things to do. (1) Throw the cargo overboard. (2) Wait for the tide to rise, hoping it will float the vessel.

Give the story of this incident to show the subject “ *running aground*.” (1) It is bad to do this. (2) It is dangerous. To avoid this we must do four things—

1. *Keep a steady course.*
2. *We must know our soundings.*
3. *We must beware of false currents.*
4. *We must trust our pilot.*
5. *We must obey His commands.*

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

WHITEFIELD'S house was often the village inn, and there he was exposed to annoyance both from drunkards and gamblers. One night the room in which he and his friend slept was next to that in which a set of gamblers was carousing ; and their foul language so troubled him that he felt he must go and reprove them. In vain did his friend try to dissuade him. He went and spoke, but apparently without any effect. When he returned, and lay down again, his friend said, “ What did you gain by it ? ” “ A soft pillow,” he answered, and soon fell asleep.

THE spectacle afforded by the wonderful energies prisoned within the compass of the microscopic hair of a plant, is not easily forgotten by one who has watched its display, continued hour after hour, without pause or sign of weakening. Weighty authorities have suggested that similar activities probably occur, in more or less perfection, in all young vegetable cells. If such be the case, the wonderful noonday silence of a tropical forest is, after all, due only to the dulness of our hearing ; and could our ears catch the murmur of these tiny maelstroms as they whirl in the innumerable myriads of living cells which constitute each tree, we should be stunned, as with the roar of a great city.—*Lay Sermons.*

To change a man's religious system is to reconstruct the whole man himself. Such change is full of peril. Only the strongest moral natures can survive the shock of doubt, which dispossesses them of all they have trusted from childhood. There are few strong moral natures. The mass of men are creatures of dependent habits and of unreasoning faith. Once cut loose from what they have always deemed sacred, they find it impossible to renew their reverence for new things, and either sink into moral indifference or into careless scepticism. Men must, if possible, see in the new a preservation of all that was valuable in the old, made still more fruitful and beautiful. It is the old in the new that preserves it from doing harm to untaught nature.—*Beecher's Life of Christ.*

Do not men need a very various worship? Do we, for instance, come to church with precisely the same feelings wanting expression on a bright, balmy spring morning—say in the month of May, when the lilacs and laburnums, and chestnut and apple-blossoms are flinging abroad their beauty, and the meadows are getting “ankle-deep in English grass,” and the fields are green with the springing corn, and all nature is full of life and hope—as on a cold day in winter, with the east wind blowing bitterly and the snow-flakes filling the air? Is there not some such thing as a seasonable religion? Do we not want, or ought we not to be able to express in our worship the varying moods which the seasons were intended to awaken? Was it on the day when “it was winter, and Jesus walked in the porch that is called Solomon's,” that He said, “Consider the lilies?” Why should not our worship at times be vernal? Has God given us flowers and colours for “week-days” only, and bare walls and dull greys and browns for Sundays?—*H. H. Dobney's “Free Churches.”*

“ONE day,” Cicero tells the story in his treatise “On Old Age,” “an aged Athenian came into the theatre, but not one of his fellow-citizens in that immense crowd would incommode himself to make room for him. As, however, he approached the ambassadors from Lacedæmon, who had their own special seat, they all rose to receive him into their midst. The whole assembly burst into applause. Whereupon somebody said; “The Athenians know what is good, but they will not practice it.” How apt are we all to neglect principles of action, which we are ever ready to applaud.

IF we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity.—*George Eliot.*

REVIEWS.

"RELIGION in History and in the Light of To-day," by A. M. Fairbairn, D.D. Hodder and Stoughton, 1s. 6d. This able volume of six lectures to the working men of Bradford deserves a wide circulation. It is full of interesting topics, and will repay a careful perusal. The following will give an idea of the range of subjects:—"What is Religion? The place and significance of the Old and New Testament in Religion. The Christian religion in relation to our political, social, and religious questions," etc. We heartily commend it to all who wish to deal wisely with the working classes on these points.

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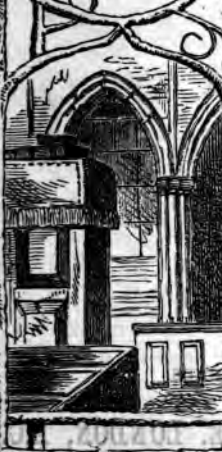
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EDITED BY THE

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THE LAY PREACHER.

DR. JOSEPH PARKER ON BIBLE READING.

IN order to understand almost any book it is necessary to read it right through at once, without entering minutely into its detailed portions, or asking any special questions regarding its local structure. Dean Stanley was accustomed to say that he read a great work of fiction first for the story, secondly for the thought, and thirdly for the style—that is to say, he perused the work three distinct times, these being the distinct objects which he had in view in the respective perusals. It will be well, therefore, for the reader to begin Exodus (and we may add every other book in the Bible) and go steadily through it, with a view of getting a general conception of the outline of the history. After that we may sit down to a critical perusal of the exact purposes of the writer in each section of the work; but he will find this second perusal very much aided by the general conception derived from the first complete reading.

Again he says, speaking of its character:—"How bold a book is the Bible! What other book cares thus for man? God always looks after His child. He will have such arrangements made as never to allow the supreme value of man as a Divine creature to be ignored. Given that sublime conviction and acknowledgment, then you may leave your temporary arrangements of high, low, employer, employed, master, servant, and the like. But all these laws, necessary for a society in the process of education, must submit themselves for the periodical criticism and judgment to the supreme law. One is your Master, One is your Judge. What book, let me ask again and again cares so much for man as the Bible does? Not one. Keep it in your families—it will keep the father in his place, and the child in his place, and give a blessing to each. Keep it in your politics—it will teach men to do unto others as they would have others do to them. Keep it in your business—it will turn your false measuring rod and destroy your unequal balances, and be just to persons on both sides of the commercial counter. Hold up the Bible; read it in the right tone; distribute the emphasis with the inspiration wrought on the soul, by the Holy Ghost; let the Bible itself, in its own language, in its own way, in its own spirit, be heard, circulated, understood; and even yet we may rescue it from the hands of the conjurer, tear it away from the hands of the priest, and make it God's own word to God's own children."—*Dr. Parker*, "People's Bible," Exodus, pp. 9 and 167.

THE BIBLE ITS OWN EVIDENCE.

A LAWYER of eminence and ability, who was, however, notoriously sceptical and profane, one day meeting a legal acquaintance, who was a decided Christian, told him that he had come to the determination of examining the evidences of the Christian religion, and asked him what books on the subject he would recommend him to read. "Read," said his friend—"read? Why, the BIBLE!" "What, the very Book of which I wish to find out whether it is true?" "To be sure," said his friend; "this is what you would do in every other case, why not in this? Read the Bible itself first of all, study it attentively, and thus acquaint yourself with the subject of the controversy. Ascertain how much evidence of a Divine original is contained in the Bible itself; it will then be time to think of consulting other books." The inquirer acknowledged the reasonableness of this advice. "But," said he, "where would you advise me to begin? With the New Testament, I suppose!" "No, at the beginning. Begin at Genesis, and go through the entire Book."

The lawyer went his way. His physician had told him that a disease which he had upon him must put an end to his life within a few years, and this had led him to seek his Christian friend's advice; and having received that advice, he now resolved to act upon it.

His friend called upon him not long after, and found him pacing the room, with a face which showed signs of intense interest in some important matter. "I have been reading," said the lawyer, "the Moral Law." "Well, and what do you think of it?" "I will tell you," was the reply; "first of all, what *I used to think of it*. I used to think that Moses was the leader of a horde of barbarians or banditti, and that, having a strong mind, he had acquired extraordinary influence over a superstitious people, and succeeded in impressing them with the belief that he was possessed of supernatural powers." "And what do you think now?" inquired his friend. "I have been looking," he answered, "into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add anything to it, or take anything away from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot; it is perfect." He then proceeded briefly to analyse and remark upon each commandment in order; pointing out the perfect reasonableness and the comprehensive character of them all. He was, as a lawyer, particularly struck with the classification of injuries to our neighbour as there exhibited. "They are divided," he said, "into offences against life, chastity, property, and character. I notice that the greatest offence in each class is forbidden. Thus the greatest injury

to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now, the greater offence includes, of course, the least of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery, every injury to purity; and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper desire in regard to our neighbour. Now, I have been thinking, where did Moses get that law? I have read history—the Egyptians and other neighbouring nations were idolaters; they knew nothing of such perfect morality as this. The wisest and best of the Greeks and Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses get this law which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous, but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent times can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it—it must have been by Divine illumination. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible.”

Thus was the lawyer prepared for the reception of the truths of the Bible by the Bible itself. We believe it might often be so. Not to every mind would the argument which convinced the lawyer prove so conclusive; but the Bible is a many-sided book, intended to meet and serve a many-sided nature. To how many persons of our time, racked by doubt or filled with foolish and contemptuous disbelief, would the best advice be, “Go to the study of **THE BOOK ITSELF.**” To talk of it, read of it, debate about it, while it is actually neglected, is like sitting in a dark dungeon and talking of the sunlight. Come to **THE BOOK**, read it with steadfast attention, pray for help from on high, and the mists and darkness shall vanish away.

HELP FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

THE UNCHANGING SAVIOUR.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”—Heb. xiii, 8.

We live in a world of change. We *all* change. So do Seasons, Trees, Times—only of ONE can it be said the same “*is*” (*new version*).

I. THE SAME IN THE ABUNDING KNOWLEDGE HE POSSESSES.

- (1) Our frame.
- (2) Our mind—hence teacher.
- (3) Our ways—guide.

II. IN THE BOUNDLESS GRACE HE BESTOWS.

- (1) Gives repentance, salvation, and remission of sin.
- (2) Provides strength equal to our day.

(3) Provides life *now* and glory *after*.

III. IN THE TENDERNESS OF HIS COMPASSION.

(1) Same helper to the weak. "My strength."

(2) Same physician for the sick.

(3) Same Saviour to the lost.

IV. IN THE MANIFESTATIONS OF HIS LOVE.

(1) Friend in sorrow, "Let not your heart."

(2) Sticketh closer than brother. "Never leaves."

(3) Redeemer to end. "Having loved His own."

V. IN THE UNLIMITED POWER HE POSSESSES.

(1) In its extent. "All power."

(2) To fulfil promises and threatenings.

(3) To complete final purposes. "Every knee."

VI. IN THE INEXHAUSTIBLE CHARACTER OF HIS RESOURCES.

(1) The same fulness and virtue in His atonement.

(2) The same Prophet, Priest, and King.

(3) The same eternally, unchangeable, DIVINE Saviour.

FOUR LESSONS.

(1) Cherish constant confidence. He must be the same object of faith.

(2) Cultivate unlimited reliance. He is the same means of Salvation.

(3) Manifest fullest gratitude. Object of deepest love.

(4) Accept a solemn warning. The only foundation of our hope.

Oh Thou who changest not, abide with me.

J. W. K.

BROKEN CISTERNS AND THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS.

"For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jeremiah ii, 13.

In dealing with these words, notice—

I. *The inferior and insufficient character of these human cisterns.*—

One of the two evils committed was that they had "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." The wickedness of their provision as well as their inutility consisted in the fact that—

1. They were self-made. "Hewed them out cisterns." Here was hard toil, but to no purpose. The labour of sin is too costly for gain.

2. They were useless. "Broken cisterns that can hold no water."

3. They produced spiritual drought. Being broken and thus incapable of holding water, there consequently resulted a condition of drought—a famine of thirst—"no water."

NOTICE—

II. *The gracious vitality and fulness of the Divine fountain.*—In the statement of the second evil which the Jews committed is mentioned the true fountain of the water of life. In addition to the making for themselves fragile, useless vessels, God says, “They have forsaken *Me* the fountain of living waters.”

OBSERVE—

1. This fountain is Divine. God is the fountain (see chapter xvii, 13, and xviii, 14) David says, “For with Thee is the fountain of life” (see also John iv, 14).

2. This fountain is abundant. The very term “fountain” sustains and justifies this inference. The fountain placed in contrast to the cistern indicates plenty, sufficiency, &c.

3. This fountain is free. “Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” Also Isa. lv, 1.

4. This fountain is vital. Contains “living waters,” “springing up into everlasting life.”

From all this plainly appears—

III. *Man's strange stupidity and folly in thus forsaking a Divine fountain for broken self-made cisterns.*—Yet it is so.

1. Men forsake God, the Divine Father, for the tyrannical premier-ship of Satan. God called the Jews His children, “My people,” and spoke of Israel as “His son,” and as being a “pleasant child,” terms which sufficiently express His gracious Fatherhood, and, therefore, the folly and loss, as well as the wickedness of forsaking Him. Yet men leave the Father for a foe, and prefer a vain creature to the living God and Saviour.

2. One evil creates another. In addition to forsaking God the Father, they substitute cisterns for a fountain. They cast away the greater for the less, the precious for the worthless, a fountain of living waters for broken cisterns that can hold no water. To forsake God the Father is to abandon the true fountain, Jesus Christ. Here are two evils which, unless repented of, will entail the greatest of all losses, and a destiny eternally painful.

Oldham.

THOS. COLCLOUGH.

HOW TO WALK.

“They also do no iniquity: they walk in His ways.”—Psalm cxix, 3.

WE notice three things in this text.

I. *The walking.*—We are all journeying on, no standing still. Think as we may, this is a fact. Time is going on, our lives are getting shorter.

II. *The wrong way.*—There is the wrong direction we may take in life's journey, there are but two ways.

III. *The right way.*—We may find it much better if we take the right direction. There are many ways which man may advise. Human reason has set up many curious beliefs which distract the memory. But the sacred Scriptures tell us the right way, and tell us the only Saviour. Learn there is no comfort until we get in the right road. The narrow way is the safest. Jesus is the way, the door, the truth and life; seek Him and follow His blessed footsteps. By-and-bye you will walk with Him in white, for then we shall be worthy.

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

BACKSLIDING.

“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”—Jer. iii, 22.

THE Jews were an ungrateful and rebellious people. “A sinful nation” (Isa. i, 4). Not so tractable as the ox or ass (Isa. i, 3). They were mostly guilty of idolatry. For this they were frequently sent into captivity. Then they would cry to God for deliverance. And God did not turn a deaf ear to them, but saved them. When Israel had been so bad in spirit and so ungrateful in conduct as to deserve total abandonment by God, he gives them the assurance of our text that he was ready to receive and recover them on their return to him.

—*Text.*

I. *The characters here addressed.* “Backsliding children.” Children who have slidden back. Backsliding is the act of turning back, and after professing to know the truth, wilfully departing from it, again to live in the practice of sin. Such persons crucify the Lord afresh and put Him to an open shame, and it would have been better for them if they had never been born. The case of backsliders is a very bad one. Their conduct is—1, Unwise; 2, Ungrateful; 3, Unhappy; 4, Unsafe.

But still they are children, whom the Father regards with tenderness and compassion. Illustration: Prodigal Son.

II. *The invitation given.*—“Return unto Me.”

1. By sincere repentance
2. By evangelical faith.
3. By earnest prayer.

III. *The promise made.*—“I will heal,” &c. This implies:

1. I will forgive past guilt and restore lost peace.
2. Cure the refractoriness and take away the inclination to backslide.

3. This He will willingly do now, if you will come to Him now. “I will” is expressive of readiness. Then say like those addressed in our text: “Behold we come.”

J. W.

THE GOOD WISH OF A BAD MAN.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."—Num xxiii., 10.

REFER to the circumstances that gave rise to the text.

I. *It is very desirable to die the death of the righteous.*—Die at peace with ourselves, the world and God. Die without regret for this life, and with bright hopes for the future. Die knowing that death is the end of all pain, trial and care, and the gateway of life eternal and true blessedness. Nothing is so desirable or important as this.

II. *Such a death is attainable.*—How?

1. Not by mere wishing. Thousands have wished well who have died ill. Holy desire must become deed. Like must regulate life.

2. Not by your own deeds (Rom. iii, 20). How then? By accepting Christ's finished work and seeking the aid He has promised to give that you may live the life of the righteous. The end always corresponds with the life.

J. W.

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jirah."—Gen. xxii, 14.

THREE striking things in this chapter. 1. Strange command. 2. Strange obedience, 3. Strange issues. (1) Isaac spared. (2) A ram provided. To the honour of God and for the encouragement of His people a new name was given to the place, which signifies "The Lord will provide." God keeps His eye on His children that He may come to their help in need. All who tread in Abraham's steps may expect Divine aid. God provides according to our needs. He gives strength according to the day. Our proposition is, "The Lord will provide all needful relief for His people." Biblical history furnishes ample proof of this. Our first parents sinned, and the redeeming seed was promised. Noah and his family found safety in the Ark. Lot was sheltered in Zoar. Joseph prospered in Egypt. Israel was delivered from bondage and miraculously brought through the Red Sea. Hebrew children were saved from fiery furnace. Daniel released from lions. Mordecai was honoured. Prison doors were opened for Peter, Paul and Silas.

Has He not often provided for you marvellously? 1. Temporally. 2. Spiritually. Faith, obedience, and the Lord will provide are inseparable. Fear not, in good time God will help you. By not interfering, till at last God teaches us to help ourselves

J. W.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Luke xvi, 19-31.

SOME think that this is a real history. We, however, think that it is a parable, and was drawn forth by the circumstances in which it was spoken. Jesus, in the parable of the Prudent Steward, had commended the principle of making provision for the future, and then went on to declare that it was impossible to serve two masters ; to set the heart on the things of the present, and at the same time on eternal verities. Covetous Pharisees among his audience scoffed at this ; they thought they might make the most of this world, and that their relation to Abraham would secure for them the blessedness of the life beyond. Christ then spoke to them this parable to combat their delusion, and point the moral which had been enforced by that of the Steward, and to deepen the impression which it had produced.

We have here :

I. *One of the most common contrasts in life—riches and poverty.*

We have brought under our notice two men :—

(a) A rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and enjoying all the good things of this life which money could purchase.

(b) Lazarus, a poor beggar, whose condition is in perfect keeping with the meaning of his name, “helpless,” “forsaken.” So helpless that he had to be carried to the rich man’s gate, there to beg for the crumbs ; or rather the soft pieces of the eastern cake, with which the fingers were wiped, and which was afterwards cast away. His blood was so impoverished for want of proper nourishment that his body was covered over with ulcers. “Yea, even” (Revised Version) “the dogs came and licked his sores.” Some have thought that this was an alleviation of his suffering. We think, however, that the mention of this is rather intended to show how aggravated his case was that his sores were open and uncovered.

II. *A resemblance in which the contrast still holds good.*

Resemblance :—Both die. No estate in life exempt from the ravages of that fell destroyer—death.

Contrast :—The rich man’s riches would secure for him the skill of the best physicians ; the best of nourishment and nursing. Kind friends would gather round his dying bed ready to minister to his every want ; and at last to close his eyes when he slept the sleep of death. Then we are told he was buried, doubtless with pomp and funeral honours ; but this is all the length his riches can follow him.

“The poor is separated from his very neighbour.” No kind hand to smooth the beggar’s pillow or wet his parched lips ; and being but “a poor pauper whom nobody owns,” when death has done its work, he is hurried into a nameless grave without ado or ceremony.

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This contrast is one which we see every day around us, and is one of the most mysterious problems of our existence. The question is forced upon us, Why is all this? Why, we cannot tell; but beyond the grave the mystery will be explained and all these apparent wrongs righted.

III. *The contrast reversed in eternity.*

Ver. 23 and 24. The rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. How terrible the change from earth's joys to hell's torment—tormented in a flame, in that state when even one drop of cold water would be a blessed relief. The language here used is figurative, but the figure must mean something; and as a figure is always inferior to that of which it is the figure, so "this description means that the final agony of the lost will be greater than that of the body when exposed to fire."

"*Son, remember*" (ver. 25). We think one of the prime factors in the punishment of the lost will be the upbraidings of memory and the stings of remorse. Even on earth we know something of the power of memory to torture us because of evils done in the past. How much more terrible must its power be in the soul of the lost, when it is fully developed and joined to a judicially quickened conscience.

Great as was the contrast between the rich man and Lazarus while on earth, it is a thousand fold greater now. No sooner does the beggar's soul leave his loathsome body than it receives an escort, beside which the rich man's funeral *cortège* pales into insignificance. He was carried by the angels, &c. How blessed the change for him from earth's sickness and pain and hunger to that land where they hunger no more, and sorrow no more, and where the inhabitants shall never say, "I am sick."

Again we ask, Why this contrast?

The rich man is tormented, not because he was rich. To possess money or lands is no crime. His sin was that he lived for this world and that alone. His great concern was, "What shall I eat?" &c. To him, as to each of us, two worlds were held out for his acceptance; and his choice was, Give me my good things now, and let the future take care of itself. "God gave him his request, but sent him leanness of soul."

Lazarus is comforted, not because he was poor. To be a beggar is too often the party's own fault, and speaks of improvidence and waste. There are, however, God's poor as well as the devil's poor, and such an one Lazarus seems to have been. To him also the two worlds had been held out, and his choice had been, "Lord, prepare me for eternity; by what means Thou seest best, though it should be the fiery furnace of affliction and the deep waters of poverty."

Lesson (1) God looks not at position, but at character.

Lesson (2) The poor may have the same selfish, worldly spirit which characterised this rich man. The converse is also true.

IV. *There will be no opportunity of changing sides in Eternity.*—(ver. 26).

Here and now there is a great gulf between the righteous and the wicked; but Jesus has bridged it, and it is possible to pass from one side to the other. But in eternity the gulf is fixed, unbridged, impassable. Here we must make our choice of life or death. For—

In the cold grave, to which we haste,
There are no acts of pardon past;
But fix'd the doom of all remains,
And everlasting silence reigns.

V. *The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice.*—(Vers. 27-31).

God has made man a reasonable being, and He appeals to his reason, setting plainly before him in His word life and death. The Bible tells of Jesus who died and rose again, and points out the way of salvation through Him. If men will not accept its testimony, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." "Search the Scriptures," &c.

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THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke xv, 11-32.

- I. HIS MADNESS.
- II. HIS BADNESS.
- III. HIS SADNESS.
- IV. HIS GLADNESS.

SUNRISE.

"The sun rose upon him."—Gen. xxxii, 31.

- 1. AFTER an experience of *darkness*.
- 2. After a night of *prayer*.
- 3. The morning tells what the *night* has been.
- 4. Blessed are they who can bear the sunlight.
- 5. Men may prefer darkness.
- 6. The sun *will* rise—on *what* shall he rise.—Dr. Parker on "Genesis," p. 363.

MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

"Who walk not after the flesh but the spirit."—Rom. viii, 4.

THE Lord's people have a standard to walk by. They

- I. Walk after the Spirit.
- II. Are led by the Spirit.

- III. Are taught by the Spirit.
- IV. Are influenced by the Spirit.
- V. Are inhabited by the Spirit.
- VI. Are guided by the Spirit.
- VII. Walk *in* the Spirit.—Rainsford's "No Condemnation—No Separation."

MARKS OF THE FLESH.

"After the flesh."—Rom. viii, 4.

- I. THE seed of the Flesh.
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- IX. The filthiness of the Flesh.
- X. The works of the Flesh.
- XI. The glorying in the Flesh.—Rainsford's "No Condemnation—No Separation."

CONDITIONS OF BLESSING.

"And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth that ye should do; and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you."—Lev. ix, 6.

- I. THE DUTY OF OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMANDMENT.
 - (1) That God has a right to command.
 - (2) That man has ability to obey.
 - (3) That man is under obligation to obey.
- II. THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMANDMENT.
 - (1) It pleases God. He is satisfied—glorified.
 - (2) It blesses man. Exercises and honours his noblest faculties. Awakens keenest delight. Secures Divine glory, &c.—F. W. B., "Homiletic Commentary on the Book of Leviticus," p. 126.

PREACHING REPENTANCE.

"And they went out, and preached that men should repent."—Mark vi, 12.

JESUS, in sending forth His disciples to preach, plainly shows that it is of Divine origin; it also demonstrates that His word must be published in every place. We find also that He sent forth seventy in twos to promulgate and preach the blessed Gospel. This Gospel must be preached to all the world for a witness of the mighty power and divinity of Christ in the great and stupendous atonement He made on

Calvary more than eighteen centuries ago. The philosophers of Greece and Rome with all their learning in arts and science were in practical heathendom. The preaching of the Cross is indeed a lever, and stands forth with its mighty power to change the heart and to make all things new. "He is the free man

Whom the truth makes free
And all are slaves besides."

Let us observe—

I. *The resolve.* We are told they went out. No man should take upon himself a special work without he considers well what he is going to do, and what he will be expected to do. No good making resolutions without we consult the Master. No good going forth without He goes with us. Therefore carefulness and thought is imperative, especially in a work of such vast importance and responsibility.

II. *The mission and work.* The *work* and *mission* to which they (the disciples) were set apart was one which demanded zeal, patience, and endurance amid many trials and difficulties; many enemies to contend with in cities and places to which they were to go. Notwithstanding, they were to *preach* the Gospel (the good news), not to give up on any account, whatever obstacles they may meet with. This work demanded great faith, great courage. They were to look to their Master and carry out His advice; remember His charge, remember His orders, to fear no one, even kings and emperors; but to be bent on one grand errand and mission—preach the word. The devils in all their rage, with all their combined force, could not vanquish the work of their Master if they were faithful and thus carried out the injunctions of their Master. We find examples in the Bible of the same spirit, and also in the history of our forefathers in the work and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

III. *The great theme.* There is no subject which can be brought before the notice and consideration of simple men like the Gospel of Jesus. You may bring science, art, literature, history, which in their relative excellencies are to be very eagerly coveted after and acquired. But in themselves they fall infinitely inferior to the subject which the preacher of the Gospel is called upon to promulgate, *i.e.*, "*Repentance.*" It means that without regard to nationality or position men are called everywhere to repent and believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It means that we are held responsible after we have heard the Gospel. If we are lost greater will be the condemnation. Repentance was the subject and burden of discourse of John the Baptist, of Jesus, of the disciples, of Paul, of all the great reformers in our own Church and time.

In conclusion, urge the importance of preaching the Gospel of

repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ with all zeal, faithfulness, and prayer. Let the preacher be clear from all responsibility after he declares the whole council of God, then he need not be ashamed. To those that hear : Oh ! take heed how ye hear, for the day of reckoning is hastening on. Oh ! repent, before it is too late Jesus is able to save.

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FOUR STEPS.

Psalm cxix, 59, 60,

THE pathway of salvation :—

FIRST STEP.—BEGIN TO THINK.

No one ever converted without serious thought ; of (1) the danger ; (2) folly ; (3) wickedness of sin. Self-examination—*I* thought on *my* ways.

SECOND STEP.—DECIDE TO ACT.

1. Turn my feet—change course of life.
2. Ceasing from sin is not turning to God.

THIRD STEP.—MAKE HASTE.

1. Because time enough lost already.
2. Because still in danger.
3. Because past is unrecoverable.
4. Because prize—salvation—must be gained.

FOURTH STEP.—RESOLVE TO OBEY.

1. Pious reflections lead to pious resolutions.
 2. Pious resolutions lead to willing obedience.
 3. Obedience to God, the channel of blessing.
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THE MONTHLY INTERPRETER, edited by Rev. J. S. Exell, M.A. Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co., 1s. The current number contains articles on "The Site of Paradise," by Canon Rawlinson; on "The Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews," by Rev. J. Barmby, M.A.; "The Early Syriac Versions," by Dr. Gleag. It is full of interest, and deserving of careful study by Bible students.

MASSILLON was one of the most eloquent preachers of France. In 1699 he was appointed Advent preacher to the Court at Versailles. He appeared, as was his wont, without pride and without timidity, and produced such a powerful impression upon Louis XIV. that he addressed to him, in the presence of the whole Court, the words, "Father, I have heard several great orators, and I have been satisfied with them; but as for you, whenever I hear you, I am dissatisfied with myself."

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

THE DEAD SEA.—The well-known writer Gregorovius has just published, in the January number of *Unsere Zeit*, under the title, "A Ride to the Dead Sea," an interesting sketch of the famous lake. He substantially confirms all the traditional characteristics, except as to the appearance of the landscape and some other minor particulars. He declares that no Sicilian bay nor the Gulf of Corinth presents more varied or beautiful colouring, only the water seems darker, as if of molten metal. He denies the general statement that no bird flies over its waters, and that its shores are without vegetation. But he confirms the tradition that no living thing is found in it; fish coming down by the Jordan die at once on coming within its bounds. The water is so "thick" that he moved in it with difficulty; its bitterness was terrible, the bottom was slippery like soap, and one can scoop up with the hand a slime like mortar. The touch of it causes great pain to the eyes. While the temperature of the atmosphere was 66deg. Fahrenheit, that of the water in the Dead Sea was 64deg. On coming out of it the body was thickly incrustated with crystals of salts of magnesia and soda.

THE Spirit of God develops the new life in the human soul in no fixed order. Men who have gone far in overt wickedness may find their first moral impulse to spring from a condemning conscience but others are more affected by the sweetness and beauty of moral qualities as seen in some godly life. Sometimes hope, sometimes sympathy, sometimes fear, and sometimes even the imitativeness that becomes contagious in social life, is the initiatory motive. For the human soul is like a city of many gates; and a conqueror does not always enter by the same gate, but by that one which chances to lie open.—*Beecher's Life of Christ*.

EVEN Paganism has deeply entered into the sense of needed purification, and of a moral deliverance only to be attained through actual death, or through austerities that are its living image. Many of the Hindu legends bring out this conviction in strange and affecting forms, as in the old poem we have lately been reading, where one of the foes of heaven, a huge giant whom one of the "pious heroes" vanquishes, kisses his conqueror's hand, and in the agonies of death blesses him as his deliverer from a long and unwilling bondage to the dark powers of evil—a vassalage from which his death-wound has set him free forever.—*Colloquia Crucis*.

A BEAUTIFUL old Papistic legend says, that one day a monk was sitting in his cell, when suddenly he became conscious of a bright angel sitting beside him; and sweet was the colloquy which ensued between them. But just as the monk was enjoying it immensely, the convent bell began to sway to and fro. What an annoying thing it was! The bell was calling him to go to the door where it was his duty to deal out bread for the poor. He wavered in his mind whether he should go or not; but discipline ruled him, and up he rose and away he went to give the poor what he had to bestow. Then, having discharged his duty, he returned to his cell expecting to find that the angel was gone, but to his surprise he found the angel still there, who said to him, "If you hadn't obeyed the call of duty and left me, I should have left you, but because you obeyed the call of duty I am here." When the bell of duty swings, obey it.—*Coley.*

GENUINE indifference is like those creatures which are only brought to light by the presence of a costly material, which they foul and spoil. It requires a great opportunity, nothing less than a Divine revelation. It corresponds in spiritual things to the darker enormities of advanced material civilisation, which could never have taken place, nay, could not have been devised in primitive conditions of society. It is the growth of Christian climes; the hideous parasite which fastens itself upon generations which inherit the faith and love of the Christian centuries. It is found in monstrous exuberance among nations and in families which are eminently Christian. It must, forsooth, first stand in the very presence of Christ, that it may rise to its high-handed independence both of His person and His work. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin."—*Canon Liddon.*

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS AND OTHERS.

All Literary Communications should be addressed to the Editor—
Rev. J. W. KIRTON, LL.D., 19, Ossian Road, Stroud Green, London, N.

Books for Review may be sent to the Editor, or may be left at the
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CONTRIBUTIONS in the shape of terse, suggestive outlines for sermons, speeches, addresses, are solicited. The shorter and more concise the better. Brevity must be studied.

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AUGUST, 1885.



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WITH HELPS FOR THE
STUDY PULPIT, PLATFORM, & DESK.

EDITED BY THE
REV. J. W. KIRTON, LL.D.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

PREACHING "TO" AND "ABOUT" PEOPLE.

THERE are two ways of preaching. One direct, and the other round about. The first is addressed *to* the audience, and the second *about* it. The first tells the hearer what he is, and the other the character which a certain class possess. The first brings the sinner face to face with the law, produces the evidence, proves his guilt, and announces the sentence, so clear that each one feels as the trial proceeds, "I am the one." The second plan declares that there are certain persons whose cases may be thus tried, calls them by some general name, and then despatches them away in the mass. In a word, in the first plan of preaching the second person is addressed, but in the second plan the third person. It must, therefore, be evident that the first plan is most likely to bring home conviction and to carry weight, rather than the second. It has also another advantage—it is the most Scriptural to preach *to* people. If we turn to almost any part of the Bible, we find invariably the words "thou" or "ye" used instead of "he" or "they." How clear is the announcement to Nathan, "Thou art the man." How spake Elijah. He said, "thou" and "ye." Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others, do the same. The Saviour also is equally pointed. "Woe unto *you* scribes." "Woe unto *you* lawyers." "Verily, verily, I say unto *you*." Peter at Pentecost says, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, *ye* with wicked hands have taken and have crucified and slain. "Men and brethren let *me* speak freely unto *you*," or "Repent and be baptized every one of *you*." "The promise is to *you*." "Whom *ye* delivered up." "Repent *ye*." Stephen also speaks equally plain to the Council. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye* do always resent the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do *ye*." Paul also used great plainness of speech; see Acts xiii, xvii, xxvi. This habit of being plain, personal, and direct in their appeals, seems to be almost forgotten by many in the times in which we live who claim to be followers and successors of the apostles.

2. Then again, there is another advantage—it is *better adapted to secure the great end preaching has in view*. None who will give the matter any consideration can doubt it is more impressive, and that it is likely to reach the conscience quicker by bringing the truth directly home to each heart. Everyone feels that *he* has something to do in the matter. *His* soul is exposed to danger, and needs saving. *His* heart

needs cleansing. *His* sins forgiving. *His* peace securing. Hence the preacher who is most direct in his style will be the most pungent, solemn, and as a result more successful than the one who goes round about the bush without aiming at anyone in particular. Therefore all may learn (1) If we preach *about* the people we must not be surprised if they regard us as not preaching *to* them. (2) If we desire results from our preaching we must try and get *each one* to feel it is *his* soul we desire to save. (3) We must be on our guard lest we may make our sermons so smooth as to be perfectly pointless and powerless. Woe betide the preacher who so modifies his tone, or dilutes his words, so as to address his congregation as one is reported to have done to a rather fashionable audience—"In conclusion I would advise all present to repent, lest they should come to a place which it would not be proper to mention to so refined an audience." Such a preacher ought to be drummed out of the pulpit.

HOW TO PRAY.

AN article, found among the unpublished papers of the late Dr. J. A. Alexander, on "Circumlocution in Prayer," closes with the following "practical suggestions to young men who are forming their habits" in respect to prayer. They are equally applicable to all who pray in public:—

1. Let your prayer be composed of thanksgiving, praise, confession, and petition, without any argument or exhortation addressed to those who are supposed to be praying with you.
2. Adopt no fixed forms of expression, except such as you obtain from the Scriptures.
3. Express your desires in the briefest, simplest form, without circumlocution.
4. Avoid the use of compound terms in the place of the imperfect tense.
5. Hallow God's name by avoiding its unnecessary repetition.
6. Adopt the single devotional phrases of Scripture; but avoid the free use of its figures, and all quaint and doubtful application of its terms to foreign subjects.
7. Pray to God, and not to man.

WE look to our last sickness for repentance, unmindful that it is during a recovery that men repent, not during a sickness. For sickness, by the time we feel it to be such, has its own trials, its own selfishness, and to bear the one and overcome the other, is at such a season, occupation more than enough for any who have not been trained to it by previous discipline and practice.—*Augustus Hare.*

HINTS AND HELPS FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

VALOUR AND VICTORY.

"Five of you shall chase a hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."—Lev. xxvi, 8.

I. RELIGION BEGETS A DAUNTLESS ARDOUR.

A fervent enthusiasm is awakened, which defies obstacles—perils—foes.

Proved by heroes of faith (Heb. xi.), by the sufferings of Puritans, Covenanters, and Martyrs.

II. RELIGION IMPARTS AN INTREPID CONFIDENCE.

They who have God on their side see armies of horses and chariots fighting with them (2 Kings vi, 17), so as to realise that "they that be with us are more than they that be against us."—John Wesley said "Best of all, God is with us."

III. RELIGION ANIMATES WITH STRONG CONSOLATION.

Foes be many, and life may be beset with devices of evil; yet this is the stay of the believer: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isa. liv, 17).

IV. RELIGION ENSURES A GLORIOUS VICTORY.

Adversaries, however numerous, shall flee. Peace shall be realised, not by complicity with the world, nor compromises with enemies, but by their vanquishment. "We are more than conquerors," &c. "Thanks be unto God who causeth us to triumph." "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb."—"Preachers' Commentary on Leviticus," p. 320.

THE LORD UNCHANGEABLE.

"I am the Lord, I change not."—Mal. iii, 6.

What a delightful text we have selected. What encouragement to the tried and tempted while passing through this sublunary and probationary state. Amid the frequent change and passing away of earthly things there is *One* that changes not.

I. *This world is not our rest.*—This world must pass away; we must all die; whatever our thoughts may be we cannot escape "the Judgment," and appearing before the Great King. You will be there, and will have to hear the solemn sentence passed—whether you are in Christ or out of Christ. This world, then, is not to be made absolutely our chief regard, knowing that this is not our rest. What the Lord has told us in His word we must be guided by, for He changeth not. He will not alter His decrees; "He is the same yesterday, to-

day, and for ever." He changes not wherever you go, or whatever circumstances you may be placed in.

II. *We have One who careth for us in all our troubles without variableness.*—What an inspiring thought for those who love God—to be able to confide all their troubles in Him, knowing that "He careth for us." The infidel and those who reject Christ know nothing about this; hence the world is all the harder—not being consoled with such blessed assurance and hope. They who reject Christ have nothing to help them on, but simply the weak agency of human effort. We know that earthly assistance is after all very uncertain. But the Christian is able to look to One who "changes not."

Let us learn from the inspired volume that God led His ancient people thousands of years ago by His Almighty power. The good old patriarchs of old He guided. Yes, even up to the banished John at Patmos. Will you trust Him? Do you desire more faith in Him? Will you rely more and more on His promises? Will *you seek Him* with all your heart? Oh, brethren, look ever to Him who is ever watching you with the tenderest regard. "I am the Lord, I change not."

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER.—1ST PART.

"Either what woman," &c.—Luke xv, 8-9.

Simplicity of parable. The plan of an architect, every line of importance, rather than a richly coloured painting.

From nature, condition, and recovery of this piece of silver learn—

1. The Relation of the Soul to God. 2. Its condition. 3. The means used to recover it.

I. NATURE OF SOUL IN RELATION TO ITS OWNER, AS REPRESENTED BY THE PIECE OF SILVER.

(a) *Valuable.*—Although one piece only, objects valuable according to their authorship, ownership, and power for good if rightly used (compare 1s. to a millionaire—same to careful widow). Soul valuable because (1) Great power which created it—God's wisdom and resources of adaptation. (2) Bears His image and superscription, and is therefore His representative on earth, as coin represents power and authority of realms. (3) The only work of His hand which responds to spiritual influence. (Nature communes with God through temporal agencies—but soul *direct*.)

(b) *Imperishable.*—Silver may be polluted or melted, but is silver still. Thus the soul. No *conditions of earth* can destroy—Sorrow—Persecution—Disease—Time—Eternity!

"The cloud capped towers," &c.

But the soul lives past long continued echoes of world's last dying groan

—beyond memory of sorrow, pain, fear—farther than Faith's far-seeing eye has penetrated! Nor can *sin* destroy the soul, which *must* live as an evidence of its pollution; though, like coin, it can be recast into image of Christ and come forth purified, whole.

II. THE CONDITION OF SOUL AS ILLUSTRATED BY CONDITION OF A PIECE OF SILVER.

(a) Lost! The soul has consequently lost its value both to world and God. Notice, fact of being lost does not *destroy* it. Isolated from God, lies useless, ruined. God's sorrow. Imagine consequence of God's most wonderful temporal work refusing to act (sun failing to rise), but here a failure on part of His greatest *spiritual* work. The thing most like God wandered farthest away from Him.

(b) A loss to the *world* also. (The loss of a piece of silver is felt by everyone through whose hands it would have passed—hence it is an offence against the law to deface.) Homes brightened, characters formed but for soul (though only one) being lost.

(c) *Degradation*, clearly taught. Prodigal. Lost sheep. The coin did not roll into some till to *mingle with equals*, but to the lowest place of all, to be *trodden* on!

III. MEANS USED TO RECOVER THE SOUL AS ILLUSTRATED BY RECOVERY OF PIECE OF SILVER.

(a) *Woman lit a candle*. Lost soul in darkness—influences, deeds and prospects. As light held by woman the—*owner of the coin*—so light to reveal our souls emanates and is *directed by God*—with what wisdom! Light never burnt more brightly *than now*—(early promise—world watched like wakeful child watching eagerly for dawn—ever and anon some miraculous revelation, but like candle to sun!—Christ came in fulness of time declaring “I am the Light of world”)—reveals *lost*! or *saved*! Light does not *recover*, but reveals; therefore sinner must be moved.

(b) “*Sweeps the house*.” How “*little*” sins settle upon us individually and nationally. Ready to exclaim:—

“Oh for the tongue of Demosthenes,
The voice of Stentor,
God for my guide and conscience for my mentor;
From sea to sea this lovely isle should ring,
Until I had *swept* away the accursed thing.”

But *God* surely sweeps. By altered circumstances—lost friend—sermon—Sunday School teacher brought directly under Gospel light.

(c) This lighting the candle and sweeping was for *ONE* only (one prodigal and one lost sheep); and had there been but *one* sinner, Christ's atonement necessary.

All now under light—obstacles swept away—yield!

Folkestone.

H. G. CLASSEY.

PREPARE FOR DEATH.

"Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live."—
2 Kings, xx, 1.

Sickness invariably produces a deep impression on the mind of the invalid, especially if the affliction is known to be unto death, as in the case of Hezekiah. When he heard the solemn declaration of this text he began to pray and weep. Why? Not because he was morally bad, for he had been very good himself, and had sought to spread goodness among his subjects. Then why did he weep? Probably because he had no son at that time to succeed to the throne. Let us apply this text to ourselves as related to the future.

I.—THE ADMONITION. "Set thine house in order," *i.e.*, make arrangements for leaving the world. In Hezekiah's case the preparation was to be temporal, ours must be spiritual. We must prepare for the future by *repentance, faith, and holy living*.

II.—THE REASON FOR URGING THE ADMONITION. "Thou shalt die and not live."

1. Death is the lot of all, as the penalty of sin.
2. Death is certain, and may come soon.
3. Death closes up the period of man's opportunities and the time of his probation.
4. Death fixes the eternal destiny of everyone.

J. W.

 THE WAY TO ZION.

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness," &c.—Isa. xxxv, 8-10.

This chapter is a prophecy with a two-fold significance—a literal and a figurative. Religion is not a gloomy thing. Christian people should be happy, because they are free, and travel on a good way to a glorious place.

I.—THE TRAVELLERS. The redeemed of the Lord, the ransomed, the emancipated, the freed from the law of sin and death.

II.—THE ROAD THEY TRAVEL. It is—

1. *Right*. "An highway." An appointed way. No trespass.
2. *Holy*. "It is called the way of holiness." No unclean there.
3. *Plain*. Simple. "The wayfaring men, though fools," &c.
4. *Safe*. "No lion or ravenous beast shall be on it."
5. *Happy*. "They return with songs and joy."

III.—THE PLACE TO WHICH THEY TRAVEL. "Zion." Heaven.

1. There they obtain all possible good. "Joy and gladness."
2. There they are delivered from all that is undesirable. "Sorrow

and sighing shall flee away." Let the character of God's people, the pleasant way on which they travel, and the glorious place to which they proceed, induce you to come on the Lord's side and be one for heaven.

J. W.

LIGHT FOR THE BLIND.

Luke xvii, 35-43.

I.—THIS MAN MAY BE REGARDED AS REPRESENTING THE SINNER.

1. He was blind. Deprived of the blessing of sight.
2. He was poor. Had nothing to subsist on.
3. He was helpless. Could not work.
4. He was hopeless. Doctor's medicine useless.

In each of these particulars he represents the sinner.

II.—WHAT HE DID FOR A CURE THE SINNER MUST DO FOR PARDON.

"And hearing the multitude, he cried," &c.

1. He made inquiry. Asked what the noise meant.
2. He prayed. His prayer was —
 - (a.) Prompt. "Immediately he cried."
 - (b.) Earnest. "He cried out." Poured out his soul.
 - (c.) Persevering. Would not be silenced by the crowd.
 - (d.) Believing. Hearing he believed and applied.

II.—WHAT JESUS DID FOR HIM HE WILL DO FOR ALL WHO CALL UPON HIM IN SINCERITY.

1. He listened. "Jesus stood," &c.
2. He asked what he desired.
3. He granted his request.

IV.—SIMILAR RESULTS WILL FOLLOW TO-DAY UPON THE CONVERSION OF MEN AS IN THE CASE OF THE TEXT.

1. He followed Jesus.
 2. He glorified God.
 3. His example was followed by the people.
- Let the spiritually blind come to Christ for sight.

J. W.

CHRIST'S COMING.

"And Jesus said, I am ; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven."—Mark xiv, 62.

I.—CHRIST'S CONFESSION.

1. Of His Messiahship and Sonship.
2. A good confession.
3. A bold confession.
4. A public confession.

II.—CHRIST'S PROPHECY. It predicted His second coming.

1. It will be a royal coming.

2. It will be a judge's coming.
3. It will be a conqueror's coming.
4. It will be an avenger's coming.
5. It will be a public coming.
6. It will be a glorious coming.
7. It will be an unexpected coming.

III.—THE WARNING.

1. The time is short.
2. Coming draweth nigh.
3. Signs of His coming are multiplying.
4. Be ready.

DR. H. BONAR.

THE GREAT SALVATION.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."—Heb. ii, 3.

I.—ITS CHARACTER.

1. Adapted to meet your wants as a sinner.
2. Simple in its terms—Believe.
3. Tremendous in its cost—Jesus.

II.—ITS INFLUENCE.

1. Mighty in its transforming power—darkness to light, &c.
2. Its authority beyond dispute—Time and Eternity.
3. The glory of its results in heaven.

SIDE LIGHTS.

THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS (Exodus x, 21).—"The plague may have been an extremely severe sandstorm, miraculous in its violence and its duration; for the length of three days does not make it natural, since the severe storms are always very brief. Perhaps the three days was the limit, as about the longest period that the people could exist without leaving their houses."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

"We remained two months at Khartoum. During this time we were subjected to intense heat and constant dust-storms, attended with a general plague of boils. Verily, the plagues of Egypt remain to this day in the Soudan. On the 20th of June we had the most extraordinary dust-storm that had ever been seen by the inhabitants. I was sitting in the courtyard of my agent's house, at about half-past four p.m.; there was no wind, and the sun was as bright as usual in this cloudless sky, when suddenly a gloom was cast over all—a dull yellow glare pervaded the atmosphere. Knowing that this effect portended a dust-storm, and that the present calm would be followed by a hurri-

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cane of wind, I rose to go home, intending to secure the shutters. Hardly had I risen, when I saw, approaching from the S.W., apparently, a solid range of immense brown mountains, high in air. So rapid was the passage of this extraordinary phenomenon, that in a few minutes we were in actual pitchy darkness. At first there was no wind, and the peculiar calm gave an oppressive character to the event. We were in 'a darkness that might be felt.' Suddenly the wind arrived, but not with the violence that I had expected. There were two other persons with me, Michael Latfalla, my agent, and Monsieur Lambrosio. So intense was the darkness, that we tried to distinguish our hands placed before our eyes; not even an outline could be seen. This lasted for upwards of twenty minutes; it then rapidly passed away, and the sun shone as before; but we had *felt* the darkness that Moses had inflicted upon the Egyptians.—*Sir S. Baker's "Albert Nyanza."*

"WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE," &c. (Phil. iv, 8).—Here are eight particulars, placed in two fourfold rows: the former containing their duty, the latter the commendation of it. The first word in the former row answers the first in the latter; the second word, the second; and so on. *True*,—in speech. *Honest*,—in action. *Just*,—with regard to others. *Pure*,—with regard to ourselves. *Lovely*,—and what more lovely than truth? *Of good report*,—as is honesty, even where it is not practised. *If there be any virtue*,—and all virtues are contained in justice. *If there be any praise*,—in those things which relate rather to ourselves than to our neighbour. *Think on these things*,—that ye may both practise them yourselves, and recommend them to others."—*Wesley*.

THE MIDIANITES (Gen. xxv, 2).—The Midianites were a nomadic nation, so called from Midian, son of Abraham and Keturah. They were remarkable not only for the vast number of their cattle (Numb. xxxi, 32-39; Judges vi, 5), but also for their great wealth in gold and other metal ornaments, showing their connection with a gold country. At this time they were allies of the Amalekites, and of the Arabian tribes called collectively "the children of the East." They seem to have extended their settlements to the east of Jordan, and to have belonged to the larger section of Arabs called Ishmaelites.—*Speaker's Com.*

CHRIST CRUCIFIED (Matt. xxvii, 35).—Some of the early heathen writers mention the crucifixion of Christ. Thus, Lucian, who flourished about A.D. 175 and ridiculed the Christians, says: "They still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced into the world this new religion" (*Peregrinus*, Sec. 11). Still earlier, Tacitus, the Roman historian, who was born A.D. 61 or 62, when re-

porting Nero's persecution of the Christians, says: "They had their denomination from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate" (*Annals*, Bk. 15, chap. 44). If any doubt had existed respecting the actual crucifixion of Christ as related in the Gospels, these writers would have known it.

HE THAT EXALTETH HIS GATE SEEKETH DESTRUCTION (Prov. xvii, 19).—In describing Tabreez in Persia, Dr. Perkins says the walls in front of the houses "are penetrated by gates or doors, small and low, in proportion to the prudence as well as the standing of the owner. For high, large gates are a token of wealth, which provokes the envy of equals, who will not be slow to find accusations for the cupidity of superiors, who can as readily find pretexts sufficient to relieve the thrifty owner of his surplus revenue, if to strip him of nothing more. 'He that exalteth his gate,' as Solomon warns us, 'seeketh destruction.'"

ROMAN CITIZENSHIP (Acts xvi, 37).—"The privilege of Roman citizenship was widely extended under the Emperors; it was originally acquired in various ways, as by purchase, by military services, by favour, or by manumission. The right, once obtained, descended to a man's children (Acts xxii, 28). The Jews had rendered signal service to Julius Cæsar in the Egyptian war, and it is not improbable that many obtained the freedom of the city on that ground; certain it is that great numbers of Jews, who were Roman citizens, were scattered over Greece and Asia Minor."

MOSES' VISION OF GOD (Exodus xxxiii, 20-23).—"As our bodily eye is dazzled, and its power of vision destroyed, by looking directly at the brightness of the sun, so would our whole nature be destroyed by an unveiled sight of the brilliancy of the glory of God. . . . The manifested glory of the Lord would so surely be followed by the destruction of man, that even Moses needed to be protected before it. . . . He said He would cover Him with His hand, *i.e.*, with His protecting power, and only take away His hand when He had gone by, that he might see His back, because His face could not be seen. The back, as contrasted with the face, signifies the reflection of the glory of God that had just passed by. . . . As the inward nature of man manifests itself in his face, and the sight of his back gives only an imperfect and outward view of him, so Moses saw only the back and not the face of Jehovah."—*Keil and Delitzsch*.

THE WILDERNESS OF TEMPTATION (Matt. v, 1).—"No man who stands on the banks of the Jordan, at Jericho, could doubt for a moment where that wilderness is. He has only to lift up his eyes and to look westward, and it is before him; a bare, white plain, with two or three narrow stripes of verdure running across it, marking the course-

of winter-torrents, extends about six miles from the west bank of the river. On its further side rises up a ridge of white limestone-cliffs, extending north and south far as the eye can see, and supporting a chain of jagged, rocky hills behind, equally white and bare. The shadow along the side of a deep ravine here and there, or that of a cloud passing across the sky, forms the only relief to the uniform and painful whiteness. A more dreary, desolate, and forbidding landscape the world could not furnish. The chance traveller who now spends a night in its defiles will not fail to hear, in startling proximity to his tent or bivouac, the wild howl of the wolf, and the mournful whine of the jackal."—*Good Words*.

JESUS CHRIST AND JESUS BARABBAS (Matt. xxvii, 17).—The name *Barabbas* signifies "Son of the Father." According to some of the best MSS. and the oldest translations, the reading of the passage should be, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" The two, presented by Pilate for selection to the nation, bore the name of Jesus. The one was Jesus, who called Himself Bar-Abbas—the Son of the Father, thus expressly claiming divine authority—the other Jesus, who was called Christ. From Luke xxiii, 19, we gather that Jesus Barabbas was one of those pretenders to the Messianic dignity, who sought to realize the Jewish ideal by an armed rising against the Roman power. According to the accusation of the priests, Jesus the Christ was guilty of the same opposition to Cæsar, though not in the same manner, as Jesus Bar-Abbas. From personal examination of the Christ, Pilate knew this charge to be untrue; and so he placed the two in mockery before the people, the Messiah of an invisible kingdom, for which His servants would not fight, and the Messiah of an earthly kingdom, who had been taken red-handed in sedition and murder. By one of those curious coincidences, so frequent and striking, they stood now side by side, of the same name, of the same claim—the caricature by the side of the reality, Jesus the pretended and Jesus the *real* Bar-Abbas, the Messiah of Jewish ideas and hopes and the Messiah of God's appointment; the one attempting to realize the picture of the Messiah, as drawn by the tempter in the wilderness, but rejected by the world, the other fulfilling the prophetic Scriptures.

THE LEPERS AT THE GATE OF SAMARIA (2 Kings vii, 3).—According to Jewish tradition these four lepers were Gehazi and his three sons, who had been smitten with the fatal disease in punishment of Gehazi's daring imposture and falsehood towards Naaman. If this tradition is trustworthy, it would explain how immediately after the relief of Samaria, according to the word of Elisha and in the miraculous manner detailed in 2 Kings vii, Gehazi should be found in Samaria

and in close converse with the King of Israel, to whom he relates "the great things that Elisha hath done" (2 Kings viii, 4, 5). Otherwise it would seem strange that Joram should be holding personal intercourse with a leper, when, even during the straitest siege, lepers had been excluded from the city.

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

RELIGION presents few difficulties to the humble, many to the proud, insuperable ones to the vain.—*Marcus Hare.*

A HIGHER HAND.—A little boy sat in front of his father, and held the reins which controlled a restive horse. Unknown to the boy they passed round him, and were also in the father's hand. He saw occasion to pull one of them. With artless simplicity the child looked round, saying, "Father, I thought I was driving; but I'm not, am I?" Thus it is often with men, who think that they are shaping a destiny which a higher hand than theirs is really fashioning. They do their own will, but they also do the will of God. A stronger hand guides them—a mightier power holds the helm of their vessel, and saves from rock and wreck. Happy are they who quietly yield to the guidance of the Almighty hand.

ONLY ONE GATE.—The old city of Troy had but one gate. You would search in vain for a second through all its high walls in all their ample circumference. There was only one way, and no other could be found that led into the city. Nevertheless the one gate was passable for all save an enemy. Even so is the way into life eternal in the city of God. "I am the door," said Christ. "Strait is the gate," He also said; and again, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Troy *was*, but Jerusalem the golden *is*. Its door is wide open, its gate ever accessible. The way there is narrow, but all the lowly can walk in it. The gate is difficult, but all may find it. There is room enough in the great heart of Jesus, room enough within the pearly gate of the ample city for the perishing millions. None need remain outside. Let us say with Ruth, "Thy people shall be my people, thy God my God."

A SINGLE ACTION.—On the summit of a hill in a State of America is a court-house, so situated that the rain-drops that fall on one side of the roof descend into Lake Erie, and thence, through the St. Lawrence, into the Atlantic. The drops on the other side trickle down from rivulet to river, until they reach the Ohio and Mississippi, and enter the ocean by the Gulf of Mexico. A faint breath of wind determines the destination of these rain-drops for three thousand miles. So a single act determines, sometimes, a human destiny for eternity.

GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE.—"Little," writes Bishop Hall, "do we know, when we go forth in the morning, what God means to do with us ere night. There is a Providence that attends upon us in all our ways, and guides us insensibly to His own ends. That Divine Hand leads Ruth blindfold to the field of Boaz."

SERVICE OF SATAN.—Tradition tells of a certain robber named Scirion, who, after intimidating the strangers that he met, would make them wash his feet, and while they were performing the act would push them into the sea and destroy them. In the same manner does our adversary, Satan, deal with men. Having once gained the mastery he not only exacts a degrading service at their hands, but in the very service destroys them, for "the wages of sin is death."

WE seldom do a kindness which, if we consider it rightly, is not abundantly repaid; and we should hear little of ingratitude, unless we were so apt to exaggerate the worth of our better deeds, and to look for a return in proportion to our own exorbitant estimate.—*Marcus Hare.*

ALMOST everything a Christian is to do for his times and the sphere in which he lives transcends his ability, and the very greatness and joy of his experience (shall I not say the reality also?) consists in the fact that he is exalted above himself, and made a partaker in his works, of a Divine power, as in his character, of the Divine nature.—*Bushnell.*

A FRIEND, who is fond of rare plants and flowers, gives me a brown-looking, unshapely root; he wraps it up in brown paper and gives it to me. I take it away; I bury it in the ground under the black mould, where the sun and the rain can reach it. By-and-bye I come back that way again, and I find, where I buried that unshapely root, a pure white lily, radiant in the sunlight. God has raised it from the grave and given to it a crown of life; and in that I see a parable of God's dealings in grace.—*Dr. Culross.*

THE great cry with everybody is, *Get on! Get on!* just as if the world were travelling post. How astonished people will be when they arrive in heaven, to find the angels, who are so much wiser, laying no schemes to be made archangels.—*Augustus Hare.*

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

GOD'S PROMISE TO THE YOUNG.

"I love them that love Me, and those that seek Me early shall find Me."—Prov. viii, 17.

A SWEET and precious truth, not merely a poetic sentiment, but the truth of a possible experience. Many have, and still continue to happily testify to its gracious veracity and elevation. Here we have—

I. *God affirming His love.* "I love." Show how God loves and especially in the Gospel sense; giving His Son to die, for us, &c. God loves in many ways, but chiefly through Jesus Christ. This is the best and greatest love.

II. *God distinguishing character in the exercise of His love.* "Them that love me." Then—

1. Love to God forms the true divinity of character.
2. Love to God is reciprocated by Him.

It elicits His special favour. See for examples Joseph (Gen. chaps. xxxvii, xxxix, xli), Samuel (1 Sam. ii, 26 and vii, 3-17), Abijah (1 Kings, xiv, 13), Obadiah (1 Kings, xxi, 25 and xviii, 3-12), Josiah (2 Chron. xxxiv, 1-3), Daniel (Dan. i, 8; ix, 23; and x, 11-19). Each of these loved God, and were much loved and honoured by Him.

III. *God promising Himself to those who seek Him early.* "And those that seek Me early shall find Me."

It is plain then —

1. That God must be sought.
2. That He must be sought early.
3. That if God is sought early He will be found.
4. That if God is not sought early He may never be found at all.

Oldham.

THOMAS COLCLOUGH.

GIDEON'S THREE HUNDRED.

I. *Three hundred earnest men.*—"There is no substitute for thorough-going, ardent, and sincere earnestness" (*Dickens*). It was a small thing that marked the difference between them and the rest. Little things are the real tests of character. All are ready to do some *great* thing, yet many break down over small matters. "This world is given as the prize for men in earnest, and that which is true of this world is truer still of the world to come" (*Robertson*).

II. *Three hundred united men.*—One mind and purpose animated them. Their union of spirit and disposition seen in their all acting alike at the river, and in the fray. "Men's hearts ought to be set with one another and against the evil thing only" (*Carlyle*).

III. *Three hundred brave men.*—The cream of the 32,000. How many really brave hearts in our school? How many who are truly fighting against sin, temptation, &c.? "At the bottom of a good deal of the bravery that appears in the world, there lurks a miserable cowardice. Men will face powder and steel who cannot face public opinion."

IV. *Three hundred believing men.*—They had faith in the God of Israel. “Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.” Their faith in God made them superior to all question of numbers, discipline, organization, &c.

V. *Three hundred selected men.*—(1.) Selected by Divine wisdom. (2.) For a purpose. (3.) According to character. Such men would accomplish more than the “multitude of a host” of well-armed and well-disciplined men.

Learn.—The conditions of success in religious undertakings—(1.) Union, courage, faith, &c. (2.) The blessing of God.—*Sunday School World.*

LOVE.

Dear young friends, one word for our motto, “Love.” I think many forget this very often—who should we love?

1. *Our parents.*—Remember, regard, and love your parents. “Honour thy father and thy mother.” This is one of the Commandments.

2. *Our brothers and sisters.*—We should try not to fall out with our brothers and sisters, but all endeavour to love each other and be agreeable. We soon become separated.

3. *Our school companions.*—Agree with your schoolfellows. Your time at school at the longest is short. Try to love each other, and in your innocent games always endeavour to agree with each other.

4. *Our teachers,* either day or Sunday school. Listen attentively to what they say; try to win their love by your good conduct.

5. *Our enemies.*—We should try to win or gain them. Try to “heap coals of fire upon their head.” Let us copy the example of Jesus in this, when He was reviled He reviled not again. Let us fight manfully the Lord’s battles. See outline on working and fighting in August LAY PREACHER.

6. *Love Jesus.*—Will you love Him who has done so much for you? He died for you—He loves you very much. His love no pen can portray or tongue describe. Look at Joseph, David, Samuel, Josiah, and Timothy. They loved God. Will you try to copy the example too? Jesus—what a beautiful, youthful example He illustrated. He gave His life for our sakes, because He loved us so much. He will take you to His beautiful home above if you love Him. But, alas! if you care nothing about Him and despise His great love, the great salvation He made, He will not give you one of the beautiful mansions above.

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

ON THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. Facility in the use of illustration is obtained by practice.
2. Illustrations are multiplied by the habit of observation.
3. Scrap books should be kept for the collection of incidents.
4. Use freely and wisely the facts of every-day life, with which the pupils are most familiar.
5. Make the largest examples of Bible facts and narratives.
6. To use Bible life you must be familiar with its history, geography, and poetry.
7. To live a godly life is the best way to light up a lesson.
8. Use illustrations for the better teaching of pupils, and not to fill up the time.
9. Do not use too many illustrations.
10. Strive by apt illustration at the beginning to excite the interest of pupils in the lesson.
11. Remember in word picturing, the pupil will acquire no more vivid idea of the lesson than the teacher has.
12. Remember that the best illustrations are spontaneous.
13. Study the masters of illustration in books.
14. Converse much with children and plain people on the lesson during the week.
15. In the use of illustrations only use the very best you can.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS AND OTHERS.

All Literary Communications should be addressed to the Editor—
Rev. J. W. KIRTON, LL.D., 19, Ossian Road, Stroud Green, London, N.

Books for Review may be sent to the Editor, or may be left at the
Office of the Publisher, 39, Warwick Lane, London, E.C.

CONTRIBUTIONS in the shape of terse, suggestive outlines for
sermons, speeches, addresses, are solicited. The shorter and more
concise the better. Brevity must be studied.

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OCTOBER, 1885.



THE LAY PREACHER

A
Magazine for all Christian Workers,
WITH HELPS FOR THE
STUDY PULPIT, PLATFORM, & DESK.

EDITED BY THE
REV. J. W. KIRTON, LL.D.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

HOW TO STUDY.

BY DR. R. W. DALE.

BEFORE beginning a book it is well to look carefully through the table of contents and to learn all that we can about the general design of the author, the method he has followed, the relations between the various topics he has discussed, and the various arguments on which he has relied. After finishing the book, we should repeat the process. We should look at the book as a whole, and piece together all its parts. When we are trying to master the geography of a country, we place vividly before our minds the mountains which run through it and fix the watersheds. These determine the courses of the river. Then we picture to ourselves the outline of the coast. Then we distribute the mining districts. The physical features of the country suggest its natural political boundaries. The navigable rivers, the harbours, the mines determine the sites where the great towns are naturally built ; and these again determine the principal lines of communication—the roads, the canals, and the railways. It is in this way, and only in this way, that we can get a complete and organic conception of the geography of a country ; and we must adopt a similar method if we are to get a complete and organic conception of the contents of a book. Everything worth reading with any care may be treated in this way—an epic poem, as well as a philosophical discussion ; a tragedy, as well as a theological argument ; an impassionate lyric, as well as a sermon ; the story of a campaign, as well as the decrees of a council and the articles of a confession of faith. If you acquire the power of grasping firmly and as a whole what other men have thought and written, you will find it far easier to grasp in the same way what you have thought and written yourselves. And this intellectual mastery of a subject is necessary to the clear and effective exposition of it.

OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

WE have much pleasure in commending the following suggestions which we have taken from the thirty-second annual report of the Open-Air Mission. They are worthy of careful consideration by all preachers. Should further information be required we advise application to be made to the offices of the Union, 14, Duke street, Adelphi, London, W.C. The report is full of interesting facts.

1. Let there be an acknowledged leader with each group.
2. Preach the great truths of the Gospel.
3. Say what you have to say briefly.
4. Do not attempt fine language or artificial manners, but speak in a natural tone, and explain and persuade.
5. Study the character of your audience, which will sometimes be a very mixed one, and adapt your address accordingly.
6. Always speak courteously, both in preaching to a group and in speaking to individuals.
7. Never resist the police. If you think you are unjustly interfered with, complain to the Secretary of the Open-Air Mission.
8. Avoid services at late hours, noisy singing, unseemly tunes, shouting, and ridiculous gestures.
9. If a person wishes to debate, walk and talk with him, or get one of your group to do so, or arrange for a private conversation; or, if necessary, request the postponement of a discussion until after your address is done.
10. Try to induce others to assist you in the singing and the speaking.
11. Always speak reverentially of God, and avoid everything trifling in manner. There is much in the open-air to disturb serious thought.
12. Do not attempt to make open-air preaching so much a service of worship as an evangelistic effort to bring thoughtless and careless persons to give heed to the things of God.
13. Never thrust tracts at persons, but offer them politely to all who may be willing to accept them.
14. When the open-air service is finished, do not remain gossiping; but if you have occasion to speak to individuals, observe suggestion 9.

QUALIFICATIONS.

1. A good voice.
2. Naturalness of manner.
3. Self-possession.
4. A good knowledge of Scripture and of common things.
5. Ability to adapt himself to any congregation.
6. Good illustrative power.
7. Zeal, prudence, and common sense.
8. A large, loving heart.
9. Sincere belief in all he says.
10. Entire dependence on the Holy Spirit for success.
11. A close walk with God by prayer.
12. A consistent walk before men by a holy life.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

CHRIST'S THREEFOLD MISSION.

"Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people."—Isaiah lv, 4.

THIS prediction was uttered over 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. It is interesting to trace how completely it was fulfilled by His coming, in the following among other ways :—

I. *Jesus Christ became a WITNESS.*

1. To the merciful character of God. "Willeth not the death of sinners."
2. To the provision God had made for man's redemption in its fulness, plainness, faithfulness.
3. To the reliableness of God's promises. "All ye and amen, and in Him faithful and true" (see John xviii, 37 ; Rev. i, 5 ; iii, 14).
4. To the efficacy of God's plans to save. "To the uttermost."
5. To the overwhelming love of God. "God *so* loved."
6. To the abiding faithfulness of God. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c.
7. To the impartiality of God. "Commands *all* men, *everywhere* to repent."
8. To the beneficence of God's laws. "In keeping His commandments great reward."
9. The justness of God's claims. "What more could I have done ?"
10. Sealed His testimony with His life. Martyr for Greek witness. One who bears his testimony even at the expense of his life. So Christ died.

II. AS A LEADER. Chaldee signifies a King to rule :—

1. To originate such laws as He felt best.
2. As law-giver—to give His own instructions.
3. As Ruler—to found such institutions as He deemed needful.
4. As Guide in such directions as He knew best. "I am the way."
5. As Teacher—to instruct man in such things as would ultimately lead to the realization of man's ideal—by bringing about his restoration to God, enjoyment of his rights, liberties and joys.

III. AS A COMMANDER TO ENFORCE.

1. He enlists for the conflict against foes.
2. He trains for war.
3. He gives His orders.

4. He provides the weapons (not carnal).
5. He encourages by His presence.
6. He leads and goes forward to victory.
7. He is all-wise, mighty, generous, patient.
8. He is true, commands by precept, leads by example.

Charge! was the Captain's cry;
 Their's not to make reply,
 Their's not to reason why,
 Their's but to do, or die.

LESSONS.—Ours to submit—cordially, unconditionally, constantly
 To obey and follow.

Trajan won the heart of his soldiers by tearing up his royal robe to
 bind a soldier's wound. Our King gave His life to save us.

J. W. K.

CHRIST'S FOLD.

"There shall be one fold," &c.—John x, 16.

Christ the Shepherd. Believers the sheep.

I. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE FOLD ARE :—

1. Pasturage.
2. Care.
3. Security.

II. A SERIOUS ENQUIRY.

1. Who are of this fold?
2. Who will enter?
3. How must they come?

THE AWFUL JUDGMENT.

"Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have vision," &c.—
 Micah iii, 5-7.

God's purpose to humble the most eminent, and to manifest His
 justice to all.

I. THE SEAT OF JUDGMENT.—"The Lord cometh forth out of His
 place" (see also Isa. xxvi, 21).

II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF JUDGMENT.—"The mountains shall be
 molten under Him," &c.

All the forces of nature are yoked to accomplish God's purpose.
 Fire, water, earthquake, &c.

III. THE CAUSE OF JUDGMENT.—"For the transgression of Jacob,
 is all this."

Jerusalem was centre of idols (2 Chron. xxviii, 24), Samaria the
 seat of injustice.

IV. THE EFFECT OF JUDGMENT.—“The order of the sin was the order of punishment.”

1. High places would be overturned.
2. Idolatry would be demolished (see Hosea ii, 5-8 ; ix, 1 ; x, 6).
3. The city would be destroyed (see Isa. xxviii, 1). Wherever and whatever we build without God—church systems, family fortunes—though cemented by strongest sins, will be hurled down.

—*Preachers' Commentary on Minor Prophets.*

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION.

Matt. iv, 1-11.

God cannot be tempted, because power which tempts must be as great as the tempted—no power great enough to tempt God.

But Christ was tempted, because human as well as divine.

His temptation was—To allow His *Divinity* to relieve suffering allotted to His *human* nature, *i.e.*, to shake off, rather than satisfy, the pangs of hunger by the exercise of His Divine Will all unknown to world. Men are tempted even by their virtues, thus—patient into apathy, trustful into helplessness, liberal into wastefulness, careful into meanness, &c., &c. What better, then, than to take example of Him who, being divine, *knew* force of temptation, and, being human, withstood it.

I.—THE TEMPTING OBJECTS OFFERED—

(a) *Temporal necessities* (verse 3)—bread, legitimate. God sent !

(b) *Worldly possessions* (verse 9)—“All these things.” Riches, their power for good.

(c) *An opportunity to prove to world God's power* (verse 6). How apparently necessary in these times.

LEARN.—Satan tempts with perfectly legitimate objects—not glaring evils—thus : (a) being *necessary* ; (b) being *desirable* ; (c) being *even praiseworthy*.

But our temptations consist not in the *objects*, but rather in *means*.

II.—MEANS SATAN TEMPTED CHRIST TO USE TO OBTAIN THE OBJECTS—

(1) To expect the *temporal necessities* by *supernatural means*—“command these,” &c. Learn not true trust which expects this. Often tempted not to provide for ourselves in ordinary ways by saying “Lord will provide.” On other hand, tempted to trust *solely* in our strength as though Satan says : “Your God has deprived you of bread by ordinary means ; you must obtain it independently of Him.” Answer to prayer is a great proof of power of Christianity, but greater proof in patiently enduring without resorting to means contrary to

4. He provides the weapons (not carnal).
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"Therefore right shall be unto you, that ye shall not have vision," &c.—
 Isaiah lxv.

Which purpose is denoted the most eminent, and to manifest His
 power is all.

I. The word of promise.—"The Lord cometh forth out of His
 place" (Isa. lxv. 2).

II. The word of promise.—"The mountains shall be
 broken up" (Isa. lxv. 7).

III. The word of promise.—"The mountains shall be
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IV. The word of promise.—"For the transgression of Jacob,"
 &c. (Isa. lxv. 16).

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God's will when *no* answer comes, being able to echo Master's words, "Man shall not," &c.

(2) To obtain the worldly possessions by *submission to Satan*—"all these things," &c. Satan whispers that we need not be *too* particular how obtained if rightly used afterwards. "The end justifies the means" is only a milder interpretation of "Fall down," &c.

(3) To prove God's power by *placing ourselves in dangerous positions* (verse 6). God, for most part, works by ordinary means. He does not require our *adventures* to prove His power. Had He wished here to work a miracle, He would have caused Christ to fall, but not willfully. Daniel proved His power, but not by rushing into the lions' den through bravado. Pinnacle of sanctification is safe, but tamper not with sin in the hope that God will preserve.

III.—THE AGENCIES SATAN USED TO ENTICE.

(1) Satan professed friendship and a *desire* to (a) satisfy Christ's hunger; (b) give Him earthly influence; (c) afford opportunity to prove God's power.

LEARN.—Beware of false "friends."

(2) Satan argued that in gratifying His own desires Christ would at the same time be serving God (obtaining riches: *to do more good*. Tasting sin: *in order to judge better how to battle against it*. Proving God's power: *in order to strengthen His faith*).

(3) *Satan quoted Scripture*. "To keep thee," &c. (Psalm xci, 11).

LEARN.—Search Scripture for commands rather than license. Best place to read Bible is (figuratively) on our knees.

NOTICE.—These "agencies," like the objects (I.), are in themselves beautiful: *but* the friendship was only professed. The Scriptures were *mis*-quoted.

IV.—THE TIME OF TEMPTATION—

(1) *Just after baptism*. Warning to young converts (plant most susceptible when young).

(2) *When alone*. When the young are away from home. Value of Christian intercourse.

(3) *When the need was greatest*. When hungry, food; when poor, riches; when unknown, popularity.

V.—HOW THE TEMPTATIONS WERE MET—

(1) *By confronting tempter*. Not always easy to discern hidden evil from so-called good. Pray for Christ's keen perception, to say, "Get thee," &c.

(2) *By the word of God*. The word is God's light. Satan knew its power. Prize it, that this may be our battle-cry, "*It is written*," &c.

VI.—RESULTS OF THE TEMPTATION—

(1) *Fitted Christ for service*. In fighting world we must first test

ourselves. "Christ was tempted that He may become more like man; man tempted that he may become *more like Christ.*" Therefore, have greater wisdom, greater love, and shall see world from higher standpoint.

(2) "*Angels came and ministered.*" Fight on! Angels waiting to bear us away after conflict!

Folkestone.

H. G. CLASSEY.

CHRIST GLORIFIED IN HIS PEOPLE.

"I am glorified in them."—John xvii. 10.

Christians called in many ways thus to glorify Christ. Among others—

I.—In the conversion of His people.

II.—By God's acceptance of His people in Him.

III.—In the progress which His people make in the Divine Life.

IV.—In the life of faith which His people live in fellowship with Him.

V.—By their patient endurance of suffering for His sake.

VI.—By their resignation under those sufferings.

VII.—By His people yielding a cheerful obedience to His commands.

VIII.—By their willing service for Him.

From "The Father Revealed, and Christ Glorified," by Henry H. BOURN. Partridge and Co.

PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL.

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark xvi, 15, 16.

Christ had risen from the dead, and manifested Himself to Mary and other two. Now he appeared to the Eleven, and commissioned them to "go into all the world," &c.

I.—THE ORDER GIVEN. Preach the Gospel. The Gospel is good news. Because—

1. It reveals to man his true position in God's sight.

2. It makes known the only way of escape from sin.

3. It brings to light the true destiny of man.

To preach is to proclaim these important truths.

II.—THE ORDER WAS TO PREACH TO ALL THE WORLD AND EVERY CREATURE. The glad tidings of the Gospel are for all. All need the Gospel. All can have it. Some try to confine it to a certain number, but it is designed for all.

III.—THE CONDITION UPON WHICH THE SALVATION IT OFFERS CAN BE REALIZED—FAITH, “He that believeth,” &c. To believe is natural and easy. We are always acting on the principle. Belief must be voluntary. No compulsion in the Gospel. Man can comply or refuse, but on this rests his everlasting destiny. Believe and be saved.

J. W.

CHRIST FOR US.

“Who also maketh intercession for us.”—Romans viii, 34.

Jesus is occupied for us in many ways:—

- I.—His heart to sympathise (Heb. iv, 15).
 - II.—His arm to strengthen (Psalm lxxxix, 21).
 - III.—His hand to encircle (Cant. ii, 6).
 - IV.—His eye to guide (Psalm xxxii, 8).
 - V.—His feet to triumph (Isa. lxiii, 3).
 - VI.—His lips to plead (1 John ii, 1).
 - VII.—His ear to hearken (Mal. iii, 16).
 - VIII.—His power to save (Matt. xxviii, 18).
-

THANK GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS.

“O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.”
—Psalm cvii, 1.

The theme of this Psalm is thanksgiving and motives for it. In the text God’s goodness and mercy are laid down as grounds for praise. To this exercise we need frequently to be stirred up.

I.—God is good. The goodness of God is that perfection of His nature by which He communicates happiness to all his sensitive and intelligent creatures.

1. God is good in essence. His goodness is not derived.
2. God is good universally. He is good to all, at all times.
3. God is good infinitely. His goodness knows no limit.
4. God is good immutably. His goodness never varies.

Of this divine goodness we have proof in (a) Nature, (b) Providence, (c) Redemption.

II.—IT IS OUR DUTY TO RENDER GOD THANKS FOR HIS GOODNESS. This is all we can give Him, and the least we can give Him; therefore, we should devoutly render it to Him. We should praise God fervently at all times, with our lives as well as our lips; by thanksgiving as well as thanksgiving. Our inward feelings of gratitude must be expressed by the outward acts of our life, by obedience to God’s law. We should worship God with thanks, and not with groans. We, above all His

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creatures, should magnify His name, because we are perpetual partakers of His goodness, continual pensioners on His bounty. Our praise should be increased by the fact that the Divine goodness is not a transient thing, but, in the attribute of mercy, endures for ever the same. Our sin required that God's goodness should display itself to us in the form of mercy, and it has done so, and will do so evermore. Let us not be slack, then, in praising the goodness which thus adapts itself to our fallen nature. Thanksgiving is our reasonable service. There is nothing irrational in the creature worshipping the Creator. All the hosts of heaven worship Him. It is quite natural that the benefited should love and serve the Benefactor.

Another harvest lays us under renewed obligation to adore the Giver of it. "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, present yourselves living sacrifices to God, holy, and acceptable, which is your reasonable service."

J. W.

THE FALSE KISS.

"Kissed Him."—Matthew xxvi, 49.

We behold a man, even one of our Saviour's own disciples, Judas, going so far as to betray his Master with an act which should at once convey the sign of great love.

We notice—

1. *False profession* (barren fig tree).
2. *The true kiss* (St. Paul's last meeting—Acts xx, 36-38).
3. *The false kiss* (Judas, &c.).

LEARN.—Do not judge by appearance. One of our Saviour's disciples was a devil. Many in the time of our Lord made profession; many, we are told, "walked no more with Him."

Empty profession will give the false kiss; the true followers of Christ will greet each other with an holy kiss (1 Thess. v, 26).

All mere profession will be swept away; it has no foundation. Let us build on the Rock.

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

DEAD Theology is a skull, and living Theology is a skull too. But the one is hollow as a cavern; it has vacancy instead of eyes, and fronts you with a mournful grin; it is strong, but its strength is nobody's defence, unless the beetle's and the worm's. The other is the helmit of the living warrior—the palace and fortress of the living inhabitant. And so surely as the brain has its sheltering skull, so surely will living Christianity have a doctrinal tenement. And for residence and defence this must be strong and ample.—*Letters to the Scattered.*

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO CHILDREN.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."—Eph. vi, 1.

NOTICE that the Bible gives a reason for obeying parents—"for this is right." Do it because it is right. One of the things that a good father and mother ought to teach their children very early is the difference between right and wrong. Sometimes it takes a good deal of teaching to let a child see the difference between what is right and what is wrong. The great Teacher is God Himself, and He has, so to speak, pupil teachers in the case of Christian fathers and mothers. And one thing the father and mother have to teach is the difference between right and wrong. You can never turn wrong into right. Sometimes children, and grown people too, when bent on doing something that is not right—in fact, is plainly wrong—or, perhaps, after they have done it, get up ever so many good-looking excuses. It is wonderfully easy for some to make an excuse. But the people who are good at making excuses are very seldom good at anything else. A clever excuse-maker is generally a very bad hand at work of any useful kind.

You cannot turn wrong into right by making excuses, or by hiding the black spots in what you have done, or by putting a face upon things, and making things look well. You cannot turn wrong into right any more than you can turn No into Yes; and the Bible says—do this, not because you are afraid of punishment, or because you *must* obey, but because it is right.

I knew a father who had five or six boys, and he had studied the verse that spoke about not sparing the rod. His idea was to rule the children by fear, and so he got the instrument of punishment always within sight and easy reach. If at any time there was any unwillingness to obey, he had only to point where the instrument of punishment was with his fore-finger, and he was sure of obedience. Well, he seemed to be very successful; his children did his bidding very promptly. But as his boys grew older, somehow his plan did not work—it was not real obedience that he got; it was done simply from fear of punishment. He was not so wise as the Bible, which puts obedience, not on the ground of the fear of punishment, but on the ground of right. The Bible does not say—Children, obey your parents because there is a rod there, within easy reach of your father's hand, but obey because it is right.

Learn to obey your parents because it is right, and you will also carry out the same principle in other matters. You will do other things

because they are right. You will be always considering the question—What is right? In your games, in your intercourse with your companions, in whatever you are about, learn to consider the question—Is this right? Sometimes people ask—If I do this thing, how will it look? What will others think about me? There is something that a boy is told to do; and he asks—Will the other boys not laugh at me? Or a girl asks—Won't my companions call me disagreeable. Well, there is a question that should come before all such questions—Is it right?

Then there are others who ask—Will anybody know what I do? You are going to do something you are afraid won't bear daylight, and you ask—Will anybody know about it? A little girl is fond of sugar, and she puts out her hand and helps herself. She asks—Will anyone see me? Will the thing be found out? But there is a question before that she should have asked—Is it right? Sometimes a boy or girl will say—Is it pleasant? You like to do pleasant things; and if a thing is disagreeable you shrug your shoulders and try to avoid it. And yet some very unpleasant-looking things are very good at heart; and some times things that look very pleasant are very bitter at heart. A dish of apples is placed on the table. The child chooses according to the outward appearance. There is a very red one that looks well to the eye, and the child chooses that. But no sooner had the teeth entered into it than he finds it is sour and bitter. The choice was bad; it was pleasant to look at, but it was bitter at heart. And so many things that are unpleasant to look at are very pleasant at heart. Instead of asking, Is this thing pleasant or not? put the question—Is it right? Sometimes, again, you ask—Is it easy? You would do it if it didn't cause you much trouble. You would master your lessons; you would be a capital scholar; you would spell all the words in the dictionary, and answer all the questions in geography, and be a good writer and a good accountant—you would like to be all that if it were easy. So you ask—Is it easy? And if you find it is hard to do, well, you shrink back. But before you ask, Is the thing easy? ask—Is it right?

When a child has given his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ the question he must put before all other questions is—What is well-pleasing to the Lord? Is this right or wrong? Christ Jesus wishes those who love Him, young or old, to act from this motive.

The root of all saintliness is giving yourselves up to Jesus Christ as your Saviour. There is no goodness worth having without that, and the Lord Jesus Christ calls you to trust Him. He is here in all His love and in all His power. He is close before you, close beside you, asking for your heart, asking you to trust Him as your Saviour.

When once you trust Him, He will make you, by His own grace, from day to day well pleasing in His sight. When the new heart is yours, the heart that Christ gives, then the life will correspond to the newness that Jesus Christ creates within you.

So I close by reminding you of his words—"Come unto Me. . . Him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out."

—*Abridged from a sermon by Dr. Culross.*

FIVE WONDERS.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock," &c.—Rev. iii, 20.

- I. In the person mentioned in the little word "I"
- II. His object in knocking.
- III. That Jesus is permitted to stand there without being admitted.
- IV. The patience of Jesus in standing so long.
- V. Christ supping with the sinner.

THREE GOOD THINGS.

"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath-day, according to His commandment."—Luke xxiii, 56.

By doing this they set us a good example for imitation in three things. In their :—

- I. Respect for the Saviour.
- II. Respect for the Scriptures.
- III. Respect for the Sabbath-day.

HAVE YOU A GUIDE ?

"Take the lantern, Johnny; it is very dark. There is plenty ruts you have to pass. You know it is some distance you have to walk." "O, never mind the lantern, mother; I shall be all right." Johnny, is off. Before he goes very far he has a bad fall in one of the ruts, and he is very lame. He feels very sorry he did not take the lantern. He was a foolish boy. He had the choice. He refused the lantern, which would have prevented him from falling.

I. HAVE YOU THE BIBLE ? This is indeed a good lantern. Read what David says about God's word. I hope you who have a Bible will use it, and not be like Johnny when his mother told him to take the lantern—to refuse it. If you refuse the instruction and commandments contained in the Bible you will surely suffer. The Bible tells us about the Saviour of the world.

II. HAVE YOU A GUIDE ? Do you think you can go through this life without anyone that is wiser to guide you over life's slippery paths ?

Some young people think they can do without the guidance of their parents. Many young people do not want their advice or guidance. Do you think you can go through this world without Jesus to guide you? He will be your guide—the best guide you can have. I am sure we like a good guide—one who knows the road—one who has gone over the ground, and knows by experience what are the most difficult places and turnings, etc.

III. HAVE YOU TAKEN THE RIGHT ROAD? Do you know that there are two roads mentioned in the Bible—the “broad” and “narrow”? Now, which road are you going to walk in? You must make your choice. I hope Jesus will teach you to walk and choose the narrow way, which will lead you to Heaven. There are plenty walking on the broad way. This way leads to eternal death.

IV. WILL YOU NOW CHOOSE WHO SHALL BE YOUR GUIDE—JESUS OR SATAN? This is a very important question. I hope you will delay no longer, but will choose ye this day whom ye will serve, viz., Jesus.

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

BACKSLIDERS OF SCRIPTURE.—No instance of backsliding can be more aggravated than that of the Apostle Peter, and yet no recovery was more signal. While that stands upon record, no traitor to his Lord and Master is justified in saying, “The door of hope is closed against my return.” The Scriptures contain several instances in which the lamentable and disgraceful lapses of God’s people are shown to be followed by their recovery and restoration. Frequently such characters, after they have been corrected and chastened of the Lord, have risen to stations of great eminence in His Church. David in the Old Testament, and Peter in the New, while both illustrating the shame and sorrow of a backsliding state, stand forth as monuments of that sovereign grace which can forgive the penitent wanderer, and once more infuse into his heart the “peace that passeth all understanding.”—*Liefchild*.

WE draw a veil over those sufferings, even because we reverence them so highly. We hold it a damnable audacity to bring forth that torturing cross, and the Holy One who suffers on it, or to expose them to the light of the sun, which hid its face when a reckless world forced such a sight upon it; to take these mysterious secrets, in which the Divine depths of sorrow lie hid, and play with them, fondle them, trick

them out, and rest not till the most reverend of all solemnities appears vulgar and paltry.—*Goethe*.

AN Egyptian mummy was unrolled at Paris in the presence of several savants, at the time of the Great Exhibition of 1867. There was indeed nothing particularly novel in the uncovering of one of those long and curiously preserved Egyptians. Mummies have been often unrolled before, and perhaps nothing worthy of special record would have been noted of this embalmed body but for the singular accompaniment of a few leaves in its armpits, and the complete preservation of their forms, although they had lost their colour. That man who goes from this world with no other acquisition than gold, or the memory of bodily satisfactions and enjoyments, is most fitly symbolized by the already described Egyptian mummy, which bore no other final token of its earthly grandeur or industry than a few dead leaves under its arm.—“*The Higher Ministry of Nature*.”

MANY errors appear, like the moon, of dim and gentle beauty, when seen from afar. When we look at them more carefully, however, we see that, like the moon gazed at by the astronomer, they have their terrible abysses and volcanoes.—*Jean Paul Richter*.

PRAYER STOPPED ONLY BY SIN.—No man can hinder our private addresses to God; every man can build a chapel in his breast, himself the priest, his heart the sacrifice, and the earth he treads on the altar.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

TRUE goodness is like the glowworm in this, that it shines most when no eyes, except those of Heaven, are upon it.—*Julius Hare*.

SIDE LIGHTS.

CREATION A PROOF OF GODHEAD.—Isa. xxxiv, 24-29. “He is our Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer. The first relationship is necessary to the idea of a God. He who made us is our God, and no one else. But what a relation is this! We can form no adequate conception of it. We have nothing analogous to it; it is perfectly unique. We think of the relation of the machinist to the machine which he has constructed; but this is re-modelling, not creating. He has brought substances into new combinations, worked them into new forms, and applied them to new uses; but he has produced nothing, nor can he do so. We think of the relation of the parent to his child; most close, tender, and sacred in this connexion, but still infinitely removed from creatorship. The child is not the property of the parent; but we are absolutely God’s. What have we that we can call our own? Nothing but our character. Were He this night to say to us, ‘Take that thine

is, and go thy way,' into black extinction we should fall, and be seen no more. Well, if we are thus His, *ought* we not to serve Him? If all our faculties are His, ought they not ever to work in accordance with His will?"—*Rev. David Thomas.*

HIDDEN TREASURES.—In the "green-room" at Dresden, where for centuries the Saxon princes have gathered their gems and treasures, until they have become worth millions, may be seen a silver egg, a present to one of the Saxon queens, which, when you touch a spring, opens and reveals a golden yolk. Within the yolk is a chicken. Press the wing, and the chicken flies open, disclosing a splendid gold crown studded with jewels. Nor is this all. Touch another secret spring, and you find hid in the centre a magnificent diamond ring! So is it with every truth and promise of God's Word—a treasure within a treasure. The more we examine it, the greater riches do we find. But how many neglect to touch the spring?

REVIEWS.

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ROMISH INQUISITIONS, their Terrors and Tortures, by C. H. Berridge. Protestant Evangelical Mission, 6d. This is a well-arranged and compendious account of some of the dark doings of the Romish Church, and it should be scattered broadcast wherever there is any attempt to teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and its attendant errors.

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"Home Sweet Home." "What do they call you?" "A Man's a Man for a' that." "Good Luck, Bad Luck, and No Luck at All." "Take Care of Number One." By W. F. Clarkson, B.A. Partridge. A series of excellent penny tracts. Mr. Clarkson knows how to write plain, and to teach sound truths in a pleasant, popular style. We are glad to see that already some of them have reached the third thousand. May they go on to the million.

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THE LAY PREACHER.

THE PRAYER THAT BRINGS THE BLESSING.

BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

THE first element in our prayer ought to be *thankfulness*. This must underlie all Christian work if it is to be any blessing either to the doer or the object of it. Our lives ought to be a strong, sweet song of thanksgiving to God for His unspeakable gift. That gift ought to breathe across our hearts like the west wind in the spring-time, drawing up the bright and laughing flowers from the else bare ground. The root of all true service for God is thankfulness, built upon a faithful reception of the Cross, and its work for us. That will lift us up, as upon a strong wind, above all discouragements, difficulties, and disagreeables; it will turn our work from mechanism to glad, impulsive service; it will heighten all our energies, and make us twice the men that we should be if we were only impelled by some iron-pointed goad of duty.

Another unmistakably indispensable element in true supplication is that of humble *confession*. If our prayer be genuine there cannot but come with it sighing and contrition, when we think of the contrast between it and the promises it professes to grasp; and yet more when we think of the contrast between the prayer and the work. We get a closer glimpse of God's purposes and of Christ's heart—of His perfect sacrifice and ineffable love, when we think of our own shortcomings; as we can fancy the poor village painter looking at his sign-post daub by the side of some great miracle of ancient art. It is the man who feels himself lame and halting on his thigh, who will be a prince with God and will prevail. So amidst our gratitude and buoyant hope, let us never forget that tears must prepare the way, ere we can be invested with the sword for our divine Master.

Think of the dreadfully mingled and imperfect motives with which we do our very best work and pray our most earnest prayers. I suppose there is no water that will not leave something behind it in the filter; and so I fear there is no work of ours that does not leave behind some earthly deposit, no prayer of ours about which we do not feel there is something to be ashamed. Think of the way in which worldly purposes creep in, as oxygen acts upon some polished surfaces. What was at first inspiration becomes routine. What at first poured out of a full heart like lava, cools and crusts over like the same lava stream, and creeps slowly down the hill merely by the force of gravitation when

the fiery impulse is all gone. Have we not to say about our highest and noblest Christian work—"Having begun in the spirit, it is far too often finished in the flesh?"

How incomplete the sympathy we have with our Master's purposes in His great work, and how little we have been able to share in His wondrous identification of Himself with man's sins and sorrows. We may well shrink from the comparison. And yet do not let us forget that it is to this very thing that we are most often exhorted in the Scriptures—to have the mind that was in Jesus Christ. It is for us to acknowledge how little we have been like that heart that was stabbed with all the wounds of humanity, and thrilled to its very depth when He had looked upon the multitudes who were scattered as sheep having no shepherd. The slowness and smallness of our sympathy with Jesus Christ in this characteristic of His work *is a sin*, that comes first of all from selfishness, and subordinately from our imperfect fellowship with our Lord and Master.

There is yet another element I may touch on for a moment—the element of *confident desire*. Prayer is nothing unless it is the outgoing of the soul to the thing prayed for, because we know it to be God's will. It should rise on the pinion of strong desire heavenward, and gaze with a clear eye upon the certainty of the things for which it asks. These two characteristics—earnest longing and confident assurance—are indispensable to anything worth calling prayer. Trying our prayers by this simple test, what poor, broken-winged things they are—like a wounded bird fluttering along the ground, or rising to the sky like an arrow shot out of a bow and then dropping down again. I am afraid that most of us have three degrees of temperature in regard to our prayers—or our desires, which are our real prayers. The highest of the three is for temporal good for ourselves; the medium is for spiritual good for ourselves; and the most tepid of them is for the spread of Christ's Kingdom in the world. Our imperfect communion with our Lord, our consequent defective sensitiveness to His honour, and also our slight appreciation for ourselves of the blessings and realities of His kingdom, account for the feebleness of our desires. We have no better thermometer as to our temperature than the way in which our confident expectation and earnest longing that Christ's name may spread through the world go up and down.

Let us get nearer our Master, and live more in daily fellowship with Him; let us grasp more firmly His hand, and open our hearts more to all the influence of His indwelling Spirit. Then, and only then, will our desires rise to a height not inadequate, not unworthy, of His great purposes. Let us be sincere in the matter, and no longer deceive ourselves by dressing up our shrinking, puny desires in verbal garments

a world too wide for them, praying for things that we do not feel and do not want ; that we may no longer mock Him and hurt ourselves with such prayers, trickling painfully from empty hearts instead of pouring in a flood from full ones.

All these things being in our prayers, they will yet fail if they be not all marked and stamped as genuine gold by an accompanying and following *consecration*. In every prayer a vow is wrapped up, and when we go to God, asking Him to do something, He may well turn round and say, "Will you help Me to do it?" Unless we can answer, "Here am I; use me," we had better be still. Are our prayers accompanied by any sacrifice and service? If not, they are worth nothing more than the gilt paper representations of valuable things which the economical Chinaman burns at the shrine of his ancestors. "It is better that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." But if my prayer leads to self-sacrificing service, and my self-sacrificing service refreshes itself and conquers its disappointment in prayer, then we shall be strong and do exploits, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in our hand.

The waters that fertilize the valley of the Nile pour down from snowy summits far away, and the river swells in its mountain solitudes months before it floods the Delta. The waters that are to cause this wilderness world to rejoice and blossom as the rose, must be fed near their source in many an hour of holy communion with the living God. When the Church is quickened to pray as it ought, the hour will have struck for some great outburst of blessing for the world.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR SERMON PREPARATION.

TRUE FREEDOM.

"If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—John viii, 36.

COWPER'S well-known definition says—

"He is free whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside."

Men may be free and yet in prison—Paul and Agrippa, Bunyan, Uncle Tom, etc., etc. Chains may bind body, yet not mind.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."

I.—NO SLAVERY LIKE THAT OF SIN. Idle to talk of liberty while slaves to sin. "Britons never shall be slaves." Every sin forges

fresh links—fetters. Bondage. Shakespeare says, "Vice is imprisonment. Cicero, "Wise man is alone free."

II.—TO LIVE IN SIN IS TO BE A SLAVE AND LIVE IN SLAVERY. James II., on his death bed said to his son, "There is no slavery like sin—no liberty like God's servitude."

"True freedom is where no restraint is known
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown;
Where only vice and injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free betide."

III.—THERE IS ONLY ONE EMANICIPATOR FROM SIN. "If the Son," &c. If not—Indeed means really. Christ secures (1) our discharge; (2) rescues us from bondage.

(1) *By Purchase*. Pays the debt. We cannot buy ourselves. Slaves cannot liberate slaves. England paid twenty million of money to liberate West Indian slaves; America thousands of lives, &c.

(2) *By Proclamation*. Truth and liberty inseparable. Liberty based on a delusion, baseless servitude.

(3) *By Provision*. It is (a) *Glorious* to free souls from guilt, power and servitude of sin—impeachment of the devil—fear of death—hell and ruin—wrath of God.

(b) *Gracious*. Great advantages (1) made son—heir—naturalized; (2) Fits for liberty. "Where Spirit of Lord is there is liberty," "Sin has no longer dominion over you," "As free," 1 Peter ii, 16. Chains of sin alone melted by love.

(c) *Wonderful*. No drawbacks. Liberty often has had battles for it sometimes lost. Freedom to pursue highest destiny. To know truth, to live in harmony with God's moral will. "I will walk at liberty," &c.

(d) *Everlasting*. This is a liberty unsung by poets, &c.

LESSONS—

(1) He who would be free must himself strike the blow.

(2) Watch for it like the slaves in Jamaica did on July 31 until the clock struck 12 p.m.

(3) Do not expect freedom from moral obligation (Titus ii, 12). Assaults of Satan (Eph. vi, 16). Indwelling sin (Rom. vii, 23). Sting of death (1 Cor. xv, 56, 57).

J. W. K.

THE SENSITIVENESS OF JESUS.

"Who touched Me?"—Luke viii, 45.

THE extreme sensitiveness of Jesus is illustrated by many incidents in His life.

Shakespeare speaks of "Friends of noble touch," referring to the touch-stone which tested gold.

I. Poverty touched Jesus. Woman had spent all her money (Mark v, 26).

II. Sickness touched Him. Ill 12 years—lepers—blind. "I am," &c.

III. Hunger touched Him. "Give ye them meat," 5,000 fed. "I am the bread of life."

IV. Infirmities touched Him.

V. Sorrow touched Him. "Jesus wept." Jairus' daughter (Mark v, 22, 23).

VI. Prayer touched Him. "If thou wilt. Son of David, have mercy." "Lord remember me."

VII. Bereavement touched Him. Lazarus, Widow of Nain, etc.

VIII. Our sins touched Him. "I lay down My life."

"And touch me on my truth,
If thou keep touch with me;
My dearest friend, as my own heart,
Thou shalt right welcome be."

G. BARNWELL, 1730.

THE DIVINE HELPER.

"Who shall roll us away the stone from the sepulchre."—Mark xvi, 3.

I.—THE CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS OBSTACLES IN HIS HEAVENWARD PATH.

1. Arising from his duties. Difficulties, complications, entanglements, opposition, provocation.
2. Arising from his troubles. Body, mind, outward state, personal, relative.
3. Arising from his interest in the Christian cause. Evangelical operations, Sabbath schools, missions.

II.—THESE OBSTACLES WHEN THEY ARE VIEWED FROM A DISTANCE APPEAR TO HIM TO BE INVINCIBLE.

1. Because he measures only their own magnitude. In themselves, they are formidable. Mountains, a flood, an army, the Assyrian invader.
2. Because he calculates only on his own resources. In his own strength would be foiled. Has he no allies?
3. Because he hearkens to the suggestions of timid counsellors. Fear exaggerates.
4. Because he is weak in faith. There are degrees in it. The real may be the weak.

III.—THESE OBSTACLES WHEN HE BOLDLY MARCHES UP TO THEM ARE FOUND TO DISAPPEAR.

1. There is the power of resolute will—power of decision—in the world's great ones. The natural will may be strong, a renewed will far stronger.

2. There is the power of religious conviction. Faith in the truth, as it is in Jesus.

3. There is the power of God. Of the Holy Spirit. Promised in the Bible, given to prayer, helping in time of need.

(a) Few things are so difficult as they appear.

(b) Nothing is impossible to Christian faith. Laughs at impossibilities, &c.

Brooks' Outlines, p. 303.

LIGHTS OF THE WORLD.

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God," etc.—1 Philip. ii, 15 and 16.

It is to the credit of the son of a good man that he becomes *like his father*, in character, thought, and conduct.

I.—BELIEVERS ARE DESIGNATED BY A DISTINCTIVE TITLE—"SONS OF GOD."

The right to bear this title was bestowed by God—"Behold what manner of love," &c. (1 John iii, 1). Through believing on Christ (John i, 12).

Was bestowed very early (Gen. vi, 1).

Betokens heirship; intimate association; suggestive of *home*.

II.—THEIR CHARACTERS AS IMPLIED IN THE TEXT.

1. *Blameless*. Not *sinless*, but *blameless*; pardoned.

2. *Harmless*—or "sincere." Heartfelt religion.

3. *Without rebuke*. Not giving cause for scandal.

III.—THEIR POSITION AND DUTY.

1. In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

2. To shine as lights in the world.

3. To hold forth the Word of Life.

4. To afford encouragement to ministers

IV.—THREE PRACTICAL QUESTIONS.

1. Are we entitled to the designation—sons?

2. Do our characters correspond?

3. Are our duties discharged?

BESETTING SINS—THEIR MISCHIEF AND CURE.

"Let us lay aside every weight," &c.—Heb. xii, 1.

The plan of Paul to illustrate a great necessity is striking to all who read his words in the text.

The apostle evidently alludes, first, to the Olympic games—the practice of throwing aside every garment which could be spared which might impede the progress of the runner in the race; and secondly, an allusion to the custom, in Eastern countries, of wearing long, loose garments which must be thrown aside or “tucked up” if he who would travel with proper speed would succeed.

That besetting sins are nursed and practised in this age is unquestionable; that their influence is being exerted for evil is but too evident.

I. Besetting sins obtain the mastery, and render the man no longer a Christian when he wilfully and habitually commits them.

II. To wilfully continue the committal, daily and habitually, of sins, and at the same time to attempt to lay claim to a part in the body of Christ, is an insult to the purity and holiness of the Deity.

III. The integrity and genuineness of the Christian Church is, by the worldly-minded, determined in the life and conduct of the professing Christian, and it is for this reason that it suffers often so much blame and discredit.

IV. The first remedy for besetting sins is thought—in prayer, walk, act, word, and life, together with an humble dependence upon and an earnest desire for the all-sufficient grace of Christ. “There is nothing good in man of himself.”

V. The second remedy is the simple laying aside of besetting evils and in the exercise of Christian patience labouring in the great work of the kingdom of Christ and the soul's salvation, presenting a devotion that at once proves the entire consecration of body and soul to the service, honour, and glory of the Creator.

THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

“Behold the place where they laid Him.”—Mark xvi, 6.

I.—THE MANNER OF HIS BURIAL.

1. By persons of distinction—Joseph, Nicodemus men of rank; secret disciples now emboldened; prophecy.

2. With many tokens of respect. Taking down of the body. Wrapped in linen cloth with spices. Laid in new tomb.

3. Quietly and unostentatiously. Two Marys mourners. Contrast the funeral of the earth and this.

II.—THE REASONS OF HIS BURIAL.

1. Proved the reality of His death. Who can doubt that He was dead when He was buried? Both His friends and His foes must have believed Him dead.

2. It fulfilled prophecy of Old Testament, Ps. xvi, Isa. liii, His own.

"In the heart of the earth," "Fall unto the ground," "To My burying."

3. It completed the steps of His humiliation. Born poor—sufferer—dying—the death of the cross—buried. Had reached the lowest point in His humiliation, from which His next act was to "come forth."

4. It softened the terrors of the grave for His people, "The lamp of His love," "A bed of peaceful rest."

5. It introduced His meditational reign. It was the connecting link between His humiliation and His exaltation.

Learn—(1) How tender His love; (2) how devoted should we be to His service; (3) how abundant our consolation when our Christian friends are removed by death.

Brook's Outlines, p. 85.

SIDE LIGHTS.

DELIVERANCE FROM SNARES (Jeremiah xviii, 22).—Lord Raglan suddenly ordered the English lines to divide when they were marching—as far as the English soldiers knew—right upon the Russian forces. But they soon perceived that the Commander-in-Chief had divided them only because he saw more than they could see, viz., that a company of the enemy was marching round the side of the hill to take the English unawares on the flank. May not God do something like this with us, that we may escape snares laid for our feet?

LIFE INSTEAD OF DEATH (Rom. v, 21).—Sometimes the condition of a church and community is like that of a famine-stricken Leyden, when it was besieged by Philip's popish army. Within the beleaguered town death reigned. Its brave defenders were starving by thousands. Succour was waiting for them in the Dutch fleet which could not reach the city. But the heroic Hollanders sluiced the dykes and let in the sea, and as the rescuing fleet swept in, they flung the loaves of bread to the overjoyed crowds which thronged the canals of Leyden. Then pouring into the great Protestant Cathedral, they made its arches ring with thanksgiving unto God, their Deliverer. Brethren, let us sluice the dykes of pride and selfishness and unbelief. The waters of salvation will flow in. Where death reigned life shall enter—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler*.

SAVING FAITH (Luke vii, 50).—It is said that one day when Bonaparte was reviewing some troops, the bridle of his horse slipped from his hand and the horse galloped off. A common soldier ran, and laying hold of the bridle, brought back the horse to the emperor's hand, when he said to the man: "Well done, captain." "Of what

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regiment, sire?" inquired the soldier. "Of the guards," answered Napoleon, pleased with his instant belief in his word. The emperor rode off. The soldier threw down his musket, and though he had no epaulets on his shoulders, no sword by his side nor any other mark of advancement, he ran and joined the staff of commanding officers. They laughed at him, and said, "What have you to do here?" "I am captain of the guards," he replied. They were amazed; but he said, "The emperor has said so, and therefore I am." In like manner, though the word of God, "He that believeth hath everlasting life," is not confirmed by the feelings of the believer, he ought to take the word of God as true, because He said it, and thus honour Him as a God of truth, and rejoice with joy unspeakable.

SPIRITUAL BATHING (John xiii, 9, 10).—Humbolt tells us that, after bathing among the noctilucae in the phosphorescent water of the Pacific, his skin was luminous for hours after. In a spiritual sense is it not true that when we bathe, so to speak, mind and heart in the truths and influences of Christianity, allowing, seeking their appropriate effect upon us, the whole character shines with heaven-given light and beauty, that we can bear about with us into the common scenes and daily duties of life? But the means need to be repeatedly used if we would have the effect continued. Let then our devoutness be habitual. Let thought and love find their home in the "truth as it is in Jesus," and our profiting will appear unto all.

PROCRASTINATION DANGEROUS (Acts xxiv, 25).—I heard a few nights ago that if you take a bit of phosphorus, and put it upon a slip of wood, and ignite the phosphorus, bright as the blaze is, there drops from it a white ash that coats the wood and makes it almost impossible to kindle the wood. And so when the flaming conviction laid upon your hearts has burnt itself out, it has coated the heart, and it will be very difficult to kindle the light there again.—*A. Maclaren, D.D.*

THE MARRIAGE FEAST (Matt. xxii, 3, 4).—A grand wedding in India is remarkable for many things, but no feature of it is more extraordinary than the universal hospitality by which it is attended. At the wedding of the Rao of Cutch, 34,000 people were fed on the first day, on the second 37,000, and on the third 36,000.

COSTLY SERVICE (1 John iii, 16).—There is an operation in surgery known as the transfusion of blood. It is most frequently undertaken as a means of saving life after serious hæmorrhage. In this operation, at least in one of its forms, the vein of the donor of the blood is connected by a tube with the vein of the patient, and by means of an India-rubber ball in the centre of the tube blood is pumped out of the one into the other. Cases have occurred in which the donor of blood has died in consequence of the operation. Yet love incurs this risk still.

WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

NOAH'S ARK.

EVERY boy would like to have seen Noah's Ark. It was the biggest ship ever built. It could have held more than twenty thousand men provisioned for six months. It was strangely shaped ; but, like the cell of the honeycomb, it was perfect for its purpose. It was for floating, not for sailing ; for use, not for luxury. The whole earth had become wicked. There was one good man. God was about to destroy the world of sinners by a flood. The ark was to save Noah. *The world is again to be destroyed. There is an ark provided—Jesus.*

The Ark a-building. The ark took a hundred and twenty years to build. Noah was a very rich man. He spent his all upon it—time, care, money. Our ark has been preparing from eternity. God is the builder. He is possessed of all riches. It cost Him His all. He gave His son.

The Ark open. Noah invited all to enter the ark. Only his own family entered. *Some did not believe.* They said : We are not so bad. God is merciful. All things continue as they were. A flood is impossible. *Some objected.* The ark could not be launched—it was so big. It could not be floated—it was hundreds of miles from the sea. It could not sail—was, in fact, not a ship. *Some had other plans.* They would climb to the tops of the mountains, where the flood would not reach them. They would sail in their own ships, which were better than Noah's ark. *Some delayed.* The flood was not for a hundred and twenty years. They could safely enjoy their sins. They became more wicked and hardened. *All are now invited to come to Christ ; some disbelieve ; some object ; some have other ways of salvation ; some delay.*

The Ark shut. The world keeps holiday. They have gone, they say, to Noah's launch. The morning is most beautiful. They have inspected the ark. Now some are dancing ; some drinking ; some discussing. Suddenly all this ceases, for all see what none can explain. The various animals are of themselves entering the ark by pairs, seven pairs of clean animals, two of unclean. Now a single cloud on the sky ; a single drop of rain ; a single mutter of the tempest, and all are prepared to enter. The door is open and Noah is inviting. Suddenly a shriek arises. It is like that from a thousand vessels sinking in ocean, or a thousand theatres on fire. It is too late. "The Lord shut him in." The door of the ark is shut. It may be the cherubim who had so long stood at the gate of Paradise have

changed their position, and, with lightning countenance and flaming sword, stand now at the door of the ark. All the disbelievers, objectors, and delayers are lost—not one is saved.—*Christian Leader*.

“For five-and-thirty years,” says a Sabbath school-teacher, “I have been engaged as a teacher, but I have just found out that I never knew anything about Sunday school teaching until this winter. I had supposed that if the lessons were well recited, and a few earnest and serious remarks made, my work was done. But this winter has shown me that it was scarcely begun; that all the lessons of chronology, biography, and geography were as nothing. This winter I have *sought the salvation of the soul*. This has been the beginning, middle, and end of the teaching. And the whole class has been converted to God.”

EARLY SEEKERS ENCOURAGED.

Prov. viii, 17.

I.—What it is to seek Christ early. It is to seek Him early with respect—

1. To the time of life.
- 2 To the day of grace.
3. To all other things.

II.—Their peculiar encouragements.

1. Most pleasing to Him.
2. It is the ordinary course of Divine grace to be found of such.
3. They have fewer obstructions than others.
4. There are peculiar promises to them.

Apply :—(1) The sin of seeking those things that hinder the seeking of Christ.

(2) Pray over the encouragements till they are found effectual.

(3) Let early seekers go on to seek Him in all His ways.

(4) Let not older sinners think themselves excluded from all hope.

GOOD MOTIVES.

Prov. viii, 17.

I.—God has given you peculiar encouragements to seek Him while you are young.

II.—Youth is for many reasons incomparably the best time for seeking the Lord.

III.—God has a right to your best services.

IV.—Let me urge upon you the happiness you will secure by having God for your friend.

V.—Let me urge upon you the danger of delay.

VI.—A distinguished place in heaven is the certain result of early piety.

THE PLATFORM.

HINTS ON PUBLIC SPEAKING.

BY JOHN A. BROADUS, D.D.

THE word Rhetoric is now a misnomer in almost all our text-books. Originally and properly it denotes the art of public speaking, but it is now used to mean merely the art of written composition; and nearly all the books bearing that title are adapted chiefly, if not exclusively, to this use. The instruction is often very fine for one who proposes to spend his life as a writer for the press, but very ill-adapted to prepare lawyers or lecturers, politicians or preachers. What we want is a man who comes before his fellow-men having in mind a train of carefully prepared thought by means of which he hopes to enlighten or convince them in certain respects, and to persuade them to certain practical decisions and lines of conduct. There are not three things, a speech, a speaker, and an audience; but only two things—a man in a certain state of prepared thought and aroused feeling, and an assembly of hearers, whom he would fain bring to share his own convictions and purposes.

(1) What are the physical requisites for effective public speaking? The most important of all is nerve-power. It is not indispensable to possess muscular strength, though this is greatly to be desired, but an orator absolutely must have that power which comes tingling through us, making every fibre of our frames vibrate as we hear. They used to call this animal spirits, regarding it as a sort of fluid that flowed through the frame. We call it nervous energy, and please ourselves with comparing electricity and magnetism. But anyhow it is a real something, and necessary to every one who would mightily influence his fellow-men. Nerve-force is greatly promoted by good digestion; and if it is to exist in ample quantity, ready at all times and lasting as long as it may be needed, there is an absolute necessity for taking abundant sleep. All indulgences that disorder the nervous system will prove hurtful to oratory. A young man often fancies that he can speak *better after losing sleep, taking stimulants, or otherwise disordering*

his nervous system ; but the resulting excitement is morbid, out of proportion to his mental condition, really injuring the effect of the present effort, and, if often practised, grievously diminishing his capacity for life-long effectiveness.

Another requisite is vocal power. Volume and melody are very desirable, but still more important is a quality of voice often overlooked, and seldom systematically cultivated—viz., penetrating power. Like everything else, this is a natural power, but it may be improved by habitually uttering vowels with purity of sound, and consonants with distinctness, and by trying to make one's self heard at a distance without great volume or high pitch.

A good figure and graceful action are also greatly to be desired. They cannot be gained by exercise on the rostrum, or by the elocutionist's drill, however these may stimulate and guide. They must be acquired by self-discipline in every-day life ; must become habitual, and, in that sense, natural.

(2) What are the traits of character most important to a public speaker ? We need not speak of persevering industry, conscientious devotion to duty, and other traits which are conditions of the highest success in every calling.

A public speaker ought to be sincere, genuine. Where people believe in a man, then argument and motive "come mended from his lips." A real orator is always felt to have more in him than he can say, and people are moved by the man himself as a mightier force behind all his utterance. In order to do this they must have thorough confidence in his genuine sincerity. Little children will sometimes shrink by a sort of instinct from pretences of affectionate interest which have deceived their parents. A crowd of hearers show similar blind instincts ; they will often not know what is the matter, but they are not really moved. The insincere speaker may go off with flying colours, but he has not really won the day. Preachers sometimes pump up a factitious emotion which does no real good. Nay, nay ; the public speaker, to reach the highest results, must be a true man.

He also needs to have a sympathetic nature. He wishes to bring the audience into sympathy with his own thought and feeling. In order to do this he must be able to place himself, at the outset, in sympathy with their thought and feeling. Many a profound thinker, even many an earnest speaker, fails to move a public assembly, because he does not understand their mental attitude towards his theme, or their mental habits in general. Observe that there is need of not merely emotional sympathy, but also intellectual sympathy. He must enter fully into people's thoughts as well as their feelings. Taking,

the term in this broad sense, one might fairly say that the first thing, second thing, third thing, in public speaking is sympathy.

(3) Study the arrangement of public discourse, and not simply the plan of story-writing or of fashioning an essay or "composition." Take lessons from "Macbeth" or "The Princess," or an essay of Macaulay by way of general literary discipline, so that those interested in oratory may make critical study of several speeches. There would be great profit to those who mean to be preachers in reading carefully the rhetorical works of Cicero and Quintilian, which contemplate not literary composition, but living speech, and which abound in acute good sense. Translations may be had in "Bohn's Library" at moderate cost.

To gain just views of theory, to initiate good habits of utterance and action, and with them displace evil habits which have grown from childhood, is a task requiring earnest and protracted labour. Study elocution with the notion that it is easy, and you had better not study it at all.

ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

THE DO-NOTHINGS.—What will they do at the final settlement? If the inspired accounts of that reckoning-day, as given by Matthew, be not a myth, their exclusion from the society of the blessed is a foregone conclusion. The words of the Saviour respecting them are unmistakable. Those who had neglected love to others, who had made no effort to lessen the misery or increase the happiness of others, who had selfishly sat still, done no good, had no eyes to see nor hearts to feel for, nor hands to help their kindred of human kind, are sent away from the presence of all the good and the holy, and go "to their own place." Their sins were those of omission not those of commission. Is there not here food for reflection for the vast numbers of Church members who live in the midst of communities, perishing, because no man cares for their souls?

SPECULATIVE PREACHING.—"He that hath a dream let him tell a dream" in the proper place, and with the honest declaration that it is a dream. But he who is the ambassador for Christ, sent with offers of mercy and forgiveness to rebels under condemnation, stands in too sacred a relation to God and to immortal souls to trifle away his time in such puerile and ruinous folly, as the rehearsing of learned speculations about the origin of evil or the evolutions of creatures or post-mortem probation. He has pressing truths to declare, imperative demands to make, and solemn accounts to render. He stands between the living

and the dead; the destroying angel is on the wing and it is only the sprinkled blood that can save. These are fearful realities, requiring instant attention, and if he is true to his Master, to himself, and to his audience, he will not turn aside, like the prophet of Judah, at the invitation of any theory, however plausible, to say a word that cannot have the support of "Thus saith the Lord." Thus only can he save himself and those who hear him.

SCRIPTURAL COMFORT.—The Holy Spirit is designated in God's book, the Comforter. He knows the sources of sorrow in each individual heart. He is familiar with all the means provided by God for drying up these sources, and has infinite skill and experience in the accomplishment of the work. It is said that this Comforter is the "Spirit of Truth." He comforts by means of truth and not by what is false and unreal. What then is this truth which the Holy Spirit uses in drying up tears and diffusing consolation? Evidently the truth of God's word. But here we are in a dilemma. Where shall we find this? How can we be sure that it *is* truth that we are reading in the Bible that is in our hands? Will those who are so confident in their statements regarding the mythical and traditional portions of the Bible, select these from the inspired portions, that we may not be found deceiving ourselves and others by seeking to extract comfort from legends, and by saying to ourselves, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace? If we are seeking the living among the dead our search must end in disappointment. If we are seeking refreshment in what is only a mirage, we must die in the wilderness. Gentlemen of the "New Criticism School," who know where the truth lies, within the covers of the old Bible, will you not put your *imprimatur* upon what *is* God's word? Will you not manifest so much of the milk of human kindness as to select the wheat from the chaff, the truth from the fable, that poor sorrowing humanity may know what *is* the truth, when it turns to some passage of the Bible for consolation? Surely you ought not to permit your less favoured brothers to continue like the wild ass in the wilderness, snuffing the whirlwind. Having tested the whole of this old word in your crucible give us the genuine article without any dross, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

NOR more certainly is it that the modern chemist extracts the most fashionable colours from aniline, which is a product of coal tar, than that the Lord Jesus makes living saints out of those who were thieves, drunkards, revilers, and the like. Another verifying fact is that Christ is still gladdening the hearts and gilding the prospects of the poor. Thousands at this very hour are treading the flinty path of

poverty with bleeding feet, but with a smile on their faces, a song on their lips, and real joy in their hearts, because they see the blood-stained marks of Jesus along that very road.—*Rev. J. Clifford, M.A., LL.B.*

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THE LAY PREACHER.

THE SIN AND MISCHIEF OF PROFANE WITTICISMS.

“I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?” (Eccles. ii, 2).

THERE are other ways of propagating infidelity besides those of open apostleship. There is many an individual who, without distinctly intending to attack revealed religion, or who, if asked, would declare himself a believer therein, is instrumental, by jocular conversation upon sacred things, by witticisms and pleasantries with regard to Divine truths, to making men think lightly of the Bible, and so to preparing them to despise its authority. The man who in any way exercises his wit upon the Bible conveys, undoubtedly, an impression, whether he intends it or not, that he is not a believer in the inspiration of the Bible; for it is altogether improbable that a man who really recognised in the Bible the word of the living God, who felt that its pages had been traced by the very Hand that spread out the firmament, should select from it passages to parody, or expressions which might be thrown into a ludicrous form.

It may be true that he does this only in joke, and with no evil design; he never meant, he may tell you, when he introduced Scripture ridiculously, or amused his companions by sarcastic allusions to the peculiarities of the pious—he never meant to recommend a contempt for religion, or to insinuate a disbelief in the Bible; and perhaps he never did: but, nevertheless, even if you acquit him of harmful intention, and suppose him utterly unconscious that he is working a moral injury, he who frames jokes on sacred things, or points his wit with scriptural allusions, may do far more mischief to the souls of his fellow-men than if he engaged openly in assaulting the great truths of Christianity. The case is the same as with the sportive lie, which is far more likely, through its playfulness, to weaken men’s reverence for truth than the bold, unblushing falsehood which has only to be discovered to be abhorred.

It is extraordinary what power there is, in some ludicrous exhibition of sacred things, to destroy the solemnity with which those things should be approached and regarded. If you have heard a text quoted

in a ridiculous sense, or applied to some laughable occurrence, you will hardly be able to separate the text from that occurrence; the association will be permanent; and when you hear the text again, though it may be in the house of God, or under circumstances which make you wish for the most thorough concentration of thought on the most awful things, yet will there come back upon you all the joke and all the parody, so that the mind will be dissipated, and the very sanctuary profaned. And hence the justice of identifying with madness the laughter excited by reference to sacred things.

The man, as we have already said, who makes the reference, may only mean to amuse the company, and he meditates no attack upon religion; but he suffers himself to become profane in labouring to become witty; and perhaps (for this is very common) he mistakes profaneness for wit, and supposes that he is clever because he is reckless. He cannot withstand the temptation of making a ridiculous allusion to Scripture, or of "taking off," as it is termed, the manners and habits of the devout; and he has his reward: a peal of laughter, which is excited by his absurd application of a text, or by his keen caricature and burlesque, repays him, if he ever had any scruples, and encourages him to have fewer for the future. But he may have wrought unquestionable mischief; he may have deceived some into a persuasion that the Bible does not deserve all their reverence, and that a profession of religion is the same thing with hypocrisy; he may have conveyed the impression that the Bible may be fairly used as a jest-book, and that he who would not be ridiculous must not be religious; and he could not have done worse. Could he have armed himself with eloquence and learning, and set himself to give many and ingenious reasons for repudiating Scripture, and living without a thought of the moral Governor of the universe,—could he have done anything more likely to induce his hearers to think scornfully of revelation, and slightly of godliness? In the one case, indeed, he could not have been in sport, and he may have been in the other. But what of this? I dread not the sound argument half so much as the satirical allusion. The mind braces itself up against the former, but opens all its avenues without fear to the latter. In sport, indeed! If there be any excuse in this for the rashness of the speaker, there is no diminution in the risk to the hearer. And what excuse is it for the speaker? As well tell me of the sportiveness of the man who takes away the linch-pin of the loaded caravan, or unhinges the rudder of the labouring ship. No, no; it is at best but the sport of the idiot, and may produce the same mischief as the playfulness of the maniac.

REV. HENRY MELVILL.

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THE DISCIPLES LED, DELIVERED, AND TAUGHT.

"But when they shall lead you and deliver you up," &c.—Mark xiii, 11.

Our Lord is here foretelling the persecutions which the disciples would be called upon to suffer for the Gospel's sake, and is arming them against the errors, the deceits, and the cruelties of those times.

He is also enjoining upon them how they are to conduct themselves under the subtlety and fury of the oppressor, and is giving them directions which, if they rightly follow, will not only determine the excellence of their discipleship, but the certainty of their triumph over the jeopardy and envy of circumstances and foes. (See verses 9 to 13.)

Dealing directly with the 11th verse, we see—

I. That when suffering persecution the disciples were to be led, and not driven.

"But when they shall *lead* you."

It is always better to be led than forced; more is to be gained from obedience than coercion. We are led, or we lose that obedience which constitutes the soul of godliness. We follow, or we are not led as Christ was and would have us to be. He was *led* as a lamb to the slaughter, &c. Stephen, the martyr, was led; so Paul the apostle. So also were Ridley and Latimer, each ending their earthly lives in the very track and spirit of their Lord and Master.

But observe again—

II. The disciples were to be delivered in opposition to becoming resistful and violently taken sacrifices.

"But when they shall lead you and *deliver* you up."

Both led and delivered. Not to be led, and then to take a final stand of opposition. The deliverance must not be less loyal and true than the leading has been. The sacrifice must be complete. Begun in being led, in true following, it must not end in rebellious resistance and forsaking. No; we are to be delivered up, not thrust up—self-offered and complying rather than conflicting with our foes. (See Isa. l, 6; 1 Peter ii, 21-23.)

Then further, the text teaches—

III. That in times of persecution the disciples were not to prepare and to rely upon mechanical defences.

"Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever," &c.

The reasons for this are evident. Self-thought, self-prepared plans of defence, would—

1. Disturb and disorder their minds.

Scheming for words of reply and methods of escape would result in mental distraction. They would be confused. And, moreover, trusting to means of self-defence would—

2. Deny and neutralise the proper office and power of the Holy Spirit. "Whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

Thus, then, acting as true believers should—serving Christ fearlessly, all our self-reserve given up to His guidance and power—we shall find the Holy Spirit (in all those cases morally correspondent to the circumstances of our text) to—

(a) Sufficiently enlighten our minds.

(b) To be timely and powerful in the exercise of His help.

Either the help of deliverance, or that of loyal resignation; complete escape, or patient endurance.

In illustration and proof of these, see Exodus iv, 10-12; Jer. i, 7-9; Luke xxi, 14, 15; 1 Cor. ii, 13. In this aspect of Heaven's cause the answer and the help must be from Heaven, and not from the earth. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven" (John iii, 27). Here alone is the true light and the power that prevails.

It is therefore plain—

IV. That where the Holy Spirit thus operates all human self-assertion is suppressed.

"For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

And this takes place—

1. For our sake as Christ's true disciples.

This is the victory He gives, and without which we could not overcome the world.

2. To prevent self-glorying.

In these crises the tongue of the learned and the pen of a ready writer come from God. Human sagacity can claim no credit. This wisdom is not of man, lest he should boast. And—

3. To secure the Divine victory and praise.

To Him who directs and speaks belongs the glory. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Thine, therefore is the victory, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Oldham.

THOMAS COLCLOUGH.

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WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

THE SECRET OF A HAPPY SUNDAY.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."—Rev. i, 20.

DESCRIBE John's banishment and its sad circumstances: Bleak, barren island, away from friends—shut off from public worship, &c.

I. Sunday ought to be a happy day.

II. It depends more upon the state of our mind than the place we are in.

III. Prisons have been made glorious and palaces dull through the spirit which possessed its inmates—Bunyan, John, Nero, &c.

IV. The surest way to turn Sunday to the best account: to be in the Spirit.

1. It would lift us out of self.
2. It would fill us with good.
3. It would deliver us from evil.
4. It would inspire us with heavenly desires.
5. We must earnestly seek it.

PARDON.

"For He will abundantly pardon."—Isaiah iv, 7.

1. **P**urchased. The great purchase was made by the Saviour when He left His beautiful home above. He freely cast aside His crown of glory. Was it to wear a crown of thorns? Yes, He purchased—
- A**tonement for our sakes. This great atonement He made complete in order that we may be made happy and brought nigh to His Father by—
2. **R**edeeming us from the curse of sin. What a dreadful thing it would have been had we been left in our sinful condition by reason of Adam's transgression. He is our great Redeemer, and He pitied us. His love for us was very great, or He would not have—
3. **D**ied for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." But Jesus died for His very enemies. He even forgave His enemies on the cross, when He uttered these words—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Yes, He has made our salvation complete. Yes, even—
4. **O**ffering pardon without money and without price. There is no excuse for any. All may come and obtain free salvation. Yes, even for—
5. **N**othing. We cannot buy it. We have a few instances of those in the Bible who thought money would purchase Divine favour. But it is nowhere sanctioned or acknowledged. It is God's free gift—*pardon* and reconciliation. He sent His Son, who was made sin, who knew no sin, that He may bring us nigh to the Father. May you receive pardon of your sins by the great atonement which Jesus made on the cross more than eighteen centuries ago. There are no other *offers of salvation* but by the name of Jesus, who came to this earth of ours and finished the great work of atonement—making our salvation perfect and pardon secure. Let me urge you *now* to accept this free pardon, for there are no pardons in the cold grave whither we are all hastening. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ now and obtain P A R D O N.

Plymouth.

THOMAS HEATH.

SIDE LIGHTS.

THE MOUNT OF THE BEATITUDES.—The undulating table-land which skirts the hills of Galilee on the east is broken by a long, low ridge rising at its northern extremity into a square-shaped hill with two tops, which gives it the modern name of the "Horns of Hattîn," Hattîn being the village on the ridge at its base. This mountain or hill—for it only rises sixty feet above the plain—is that known to the pilgrims as the Mount of the Beatitudes, the supposed scene of the Sermon on the Mount. . . . It is the only height seen in this direction from the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret. The plain on which it stands is easily accessible from the lake, and from that plain to the summit is but a few minutes' walk. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude. . . . Its situation is central both to the peasants of the Galilæan hills and the fishermen of the Galilæan lake, between which it stands, and would therefore be a natural resort both to "Jesus and His disciples," when they retired for solitude from the shores of the sea, and also to the crowds who assembled "from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan."—Stanley's *Sinai*, p. 369.

KEEP.—This old Saxon word formerly signified a castle or fort. That is also the idea of the Greek. God is our refuge, strong tower, fortress. But He is an active keeper, a front and rearward, a shield and cover. There is infinite comfort in 2 Tim. i, 12, "He is able to keep;" and, is He not as willing as He is able? Troubled souls are exhorted to cling to the Lord. That is well; but still better that they remember how the Lord clings to them. Abide in the fort, and its walls and guards will repel the enemy. Our Father carries the weak in His arms. Are we not all weak? Are not His arms beneath us all? Need we be like nervous children clinging to arms that bear us? Our very clinging thus becomes an act of unbelief, of fear, and doubt. Abiding is better than clinging. "He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

SAVOURLESS SALT.—I have often seen just such salt and the identical disposition of it that our Lord has mentioned. A merchant of Sidon having farmed of the Government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over an immense quantity from the marshes of Cyprus, enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for at least twenty years. This he had transferred to the mountains to cheat the

Government out of some small percentage. Sixty-five houses in the village of Jûne were rented and filled with salt. These houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground was in a few years entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the street to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. It was "good for nothing."—*Land and Book*, p. 381.

BIBLE POETRY.—The most obvious feature of Bible poetry is its intense theism. The question of the existence of God is never raised, and an atheist—if there be one—is simply set down as a fool. The Hebrew poet lives and moves in the idea of a living God, as a self-revealing, personal, almighty, holy, omniscient, all-pervading, and merciful Being, and overflows with His adoration and praise. He sees and hears God in the works of creation, and in the events of history. Jehovah is to him the Maker and Preserver of all things. He shines in the firmament, He rides on the thunderstorm, He clothes the lilies, He feeds the ravens and young lions, and the cattle on a thousand hills; He gives rain and fruitful seasons; He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses, David, and the prophets. He dwells with Israel, He is their ever-present help and shield, their comfort and joy. He is just and holy in His judgments, good, merciful, and true in all His dealings. He overrules even the wrath of man for His own glory and the good of His people.—*Prof. Schaff*.

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